

## Who survives if the sci-fi boom goes bust?

BY ED FLIXMAN

**U**NEASY TIMES HAVE ARRIVED IN OUR PART OF THE UNIVERSE. We're not talking about the Cardassian conflict that seems to be brewing for the residents of *Deep Space 9*; and not the multiple interspecies conflicts that make life within the depths of *Babylon 5* so gosh darn difficult. Not even the craze for Tek, that drug-on-a-microchip, has us worried, and, to be frank, we think that the full-scale alien invasion hinted at

in certain top-secret government *X-Files* is all smoke and mirrors. Certainly the least of our worries is whether that kid in *seaQuest* is ever going to lose his virginity.

No, what concerns us is that, in the midst of a sudden proliferation of science fiction and fantasy television pro-

gramming a program on a conventional network, or a syndicated show, is not, at that moment, watching the Sci-Fi Channel. But it remained a non-issue; the scope of *Sci-Fi Entertainment* covers all sci-fi films and movies, not just those that appear on the Sci-Fi Channel.

That's because our devotion to the Channel is no narrow dedication to a particular cablecast frequency, or simply to a job, however much fun that job may be. Our job and the Channel itself exist because of a commitment to something much broader; to the idea that science fiction and fantasy hold the greatest potential to fulfill the powers of the human imagination.

Giddy rhetoric, yes—grand-sounding words, and a tall order to fill. But believe it; that's what the Channel and this magazine are all about. Just remember that it's through your letters and E-mail that you offer us the greatest hope of evolving into the best that we can be. For similar reasons, we'd like to see all of sci-fi television evolve into the best that it can be, and reach the unexplored heights that all fans of the genre know are waiting. We wish every series years of first-run success, and then an even longer second life on the Sci-Fi Channel.

While there are plenty of brilliant creative people involved in the shows we're talking about, most of whom are truly fans of the genre, the "creatives" must sometimes deal with creatures of another breed, as alien to the true fans as any borg. These are people who only feel safe when they feel smarter than their own audience. And that's an attitude that seldom produces good sci-fi television.

Now, with a new century and a new millennium so very close, we stand on the brink of an explosion in media technology that will not only change the way we entertain ourselves, but seems very likely to change the way we live in ways we cannot yet imagine. Think of how our society has been changed by the invention of the telephone, of television, and the computer. Combine them, raising their potential to the power of three, and that is the future we now face.

The uncertainty and the excitement offered by such a prospect is a large part of the need we feel to contemplate the future. In this respect, science fiction serves as a means to accommodate ourselves, our best hopes and greatest fears. And, if a "shake-out" actually does happen, we trust that the survivors will be the shows with the creatives, true fans, and visionaries at the helm. □



Sci-fi television series like *Friday the 13th* (above) find new life and a loyal new audience on the Sci-Fi Channel.

grams, there's been an attendant increase in the rivalry fostered by the rating's race. In the midst of a sci-fi boom, Hollywood Powers-That-Be are quivering in their Guccis for fear of a science fiction shake-out. In window offices all over Los Angeles, science fiction television producers are straining their eyes to see the fine print in the overnight ratings....

For instance: As we were preparing this, our second issue, it was decided to put a greater emphasis on television. As we proceeded to call and fax the syndicators, publicists, producers, and, finally, the creators of the television series we most admired, on more than one occasion we encountered a remarkable attitude.

In each case, the conversation went something like this: Us: "We'd like to do an article on your program."

Them: "Uh...wait a second...isn't *Sci-Fi Entertainment* the official magazine of the Sci-Fi Channel?"

Us: "Yes."

Them: (sounding puzzled) "So why would you want to promote the competition?"

Of course it had occurred to us that someone watch-

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# Virtually real: experience on a micro chip is here.

BY JEFFREY FRENTZEN

**E**VER WANTED TO TAKE A BREAK FROM THE REAL WORLD and toss rocks on the Moon—or, perhaps, battle it out with some Terminatorlike creature in the year 2 billion? It's easy to marvel at the fantasy potential of the *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* holodeck, where characters immerse themselves in a computer-generated fantasy

and interact with realistic simulations. Back here on earth, in the present-day, primitive variations of the holodeck are starting to pop up—arcade games, business simulations, carnival attractions—in which you "become" part of a "virtual" world.

Virtual reality—buzzword, fantasy, and hype of last year's Consumer Electronics Show and in magazines

these early game offerings are aggressive in nature, involving hand-to-hand combat, battles and shootings.

You may have heard stories about how the U.S. military uses virtual-reality flight simulators to train pilots. In the near future, you may be able to train as a fighter pilot in the comfort of your own home. At least one company, Loral Advanced Distributed Simulation, produces video games, hardware, and software based on their large-scale interactive tactical team trainers in the U.S. military. Another product, *NightFighter* (from XTAR), is a virtual-reality flight simulator capable of doing a 360-degree roll in 1 second. The company, which is also trying to extend its market beyond its military contracts, runs their game on a low-end PC.

Virtual Reality Laboratories' Vistapro 3.0 is a bit more conventional but sounds fun. On a 3-D landscape, users can re-create and explore landscapes on Earth or Mars. The program includes realistic 24-bit color, buildings, waterfalls, roads, 3-D trees and vegetation, clouds, fractal texturing, and the ability to generate left and right images for 3-D viewing. It also runs on a PC, but is strictly for commercial use. (As with most currently existing virtual reality systems, Vistapro costs a lot... \$110,000 for two players!)

Don't fret if you can't run down to Walmart and buy this sort of thing tomorrow. By the year's end, Sega America has promised to deliver the Sega VR add-on, a gizmo that fits over your head and connects to the 16-bit Genesis game system. It will immerse players in a 3-D universe, with software that features stereo sound and panoramic views. The add-on, expected to cost under \$300, will come with a VR game called *Nuclear Rush*.

In the meantime, though, theme parks and traveling fairs are the first to seriously get into the virtual reality act.

Virtual World is a retail entertainment center that uses pod-based simulators, networked in groups of eight.

Two virtual-reality games are available: *BattleTech*, a sit-down game based on the series of paperback *BattleTech* books, has players take the helm of a robot tank and play shoot-'em-up with other players; *Red Planet*, which puts players in futuristic hovercraft races on Mars, is similar to *BattleTech* in that it lets players move about freely in the virtual reality



**ABOVE:** A virtual reality scene from Straylight Corporation's upcoming, as yet untitled futuristic science fiction game. **RIGHT:** Discoverers is Knowledge Adventure's upcoming (immersive) virtual reality game.

devoted to video and computer games—is slowly becoming a reality. Soon, it will be coming to a town near you, in one form or another.

Arcade game and computer hardware and software manufacturers will this year start releasing products aimed mostly at children, who want them to put down their video game controllers and "step" into a virtual adventure. In order to enter these strange new worlds, though, players must wear special helmets, gloves, and/or eyeglasses to "see" what they're doing, "move" objects, or negotiate virtual terrain. Some of the virtual reality systems are "immersive," in which the player experiences the fantasy adventure in three dimensions, with 360-degree visual tracking and surround sound.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on your taste), many of



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environment and interact with other players. Disney has also worked several so-called "sit-down" virtual reality games at their theme parks.

Some of the new virtual reality games offer almost rudimentary video graphics resolution—320-by-240 pixel resolution is not uncommon. For comparison, imagine a 16-color picture on a 360-degree Commodore 64 or Atari computer screen. Most virtual reality systems show flat-shaded polygons or simple wireframe images.

The one-player virtual reality game, *Cybertron*, recently released from StrayLight Corp., may be more representative of future directions. Players are strapped into a gyroscopic wheel and, using a headmounted display, are immersed in a space-age pirate adventure called *Cosmic Debris*, which features odd-looking creatures, and multicolored waterfalls. *Cybertron* provides more sophisticated imagery than some virtual reality games—realistic textures with shading, reflections, and shadows.

Alternate Worlds Technology raised some eyebrows last year when it released a virtual reality version of the popular (and gory) World War II PC-based blast-em-up game *Wolfenstein*. A one-player game, *Wolfenstein VR* gives you a gun and sets you loose in a maze-like fortress crawling with Nazis, and you must murder everyone who stands in your way before claiming the final prize, Hitler. Most of these newfangled arcade games cost players about \$1 per minute.

You can't play Corporate Communication Group's basketball game, *Jumpshot*, sitting down, and it doesn't require players to wear the special virtual reality headgear. This might be a good thing, especially in arcades, where the virtual reality helmets would be worn by scores of people, all leaving hair and other biological residues inside the helmets, which would need a good cleaning after each use. In *Jumpshot*, players stand in front of a blue screen and interact with a "virtual" basketball court environment. A special glove tracks the player's hand movements; the person plays with an on-screen virtual basketball and is challenged by a virtual opponent.

Roughly three dozen software and hardware developers are creating entertainment centers and home-video equipment that use virtual reality technology. The entertainment market is seen as a first step, with the eventual cash cow being the corporate buyer—at least that's the prediction of Peter Matthews, vice-president of marketing at Forte Technologies. Forte creates hardware for virtual reality programs, including the VFX1 head-mounted system, a device that resembles a combination bicycle helmet and stereo headphone. Eventually, business applications for virtual reality systems will include:

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Inevitably, virtual reality will invade the world of advertising. Already, one company has developed an immersive virtual reality system designed for promotional events, which is based on a gyro-motion platform that allows full-body involvement. Imagine virtual billboards containing ads and marketing messages.

Don't let those guys into my holodeck....!

### Sources for Information on Virtual Reality

*Virtual Reality World:* A magazine about all aspects of VR, including new products and entertainment. Meckler Media Publishing, 11 Ferry Lane W., Westport, CT 06880. (203) 226-6967, fax (203) 454-5840.

*Real Time Graphics:* This newsletter covers technical aspects of VR, written by consultants and technicians. CGSD Corp., 2483 Old Middlefield Way #140, Mountain View, CA 94043. (415) 903-4920.

*CompuServe Inc.:* The Computer Art Forum special-interest group holds online conferences and offers messages centers and downloadable VR-related files. CompuServe Inc., 5000 Arlington Centre Blvd., Columbus, OH 43220. (614) 457-8650.

*CyberEdge Journal:* A bimonthly newsletter that covers VR news, conferences, and products. CyberEdge Journal, #1 Gate Six Rd., Suite G, Sausalito, CA 94965. (415) 331-3343.

*Computers in Science and Art, 1994:* A catalog listing over 1,000 products — some VR-related — including books, videos, and software. Media Magic, P.O. Box 598, Nicasio, CA 94946. (415) 662-2426.

*Virtual Reality Handbook:* This book offers a description of VR and its history, as well as a comprehensive listing of print- and electronic-based resources. Minus Habes Records, via Giustino Fortunato 8/N, 70125 Italy (39). 80-410950.

*PCVR:* A magazine devoted to VR on PCs. PCVR, P.O. Box 475, Stoughton, WI 53589.

*Virtual Reality Sourcebook:* A book offering information on over 400 selected organizations, research groups, conferences, publications, and software. The publisher also offers the VR-Infoline, a 24-hour 900 line that updates the latest news in the VR industry. SophisTech Research, 421 N. Rodeo Dr., Suite 15400, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. (310) 421-7295. □

Jeffrey Frentzen is a freelance writer based in Massachusetts.

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## Cyberpunk author William Gibson is set for his big screen debut.

BY PAUL SAMMON

**P**ERHAPS IT'S THE APPROACHING MILLENNIUM... perhaps it's the fact that science fiction has yet to deliver a box-office loser on the scale of *Last Action Hero*. It might even be that the generation that grew up with *Star Wars* has reached the filmmaking age. Whatever the cause, American moviegoers seem on the brink of being deluged by a torrent of sci fi. Most of the projects on the front burner are being planned as

mega-budgeted blockbusters, but the biggest buzz is being created by a mid-budget production, William Gibson's *Johnny Mnemonic*, which recently completed filming in Canada. For years, fans were titillated by plans to film Gibson's *Neuromancer*, the novel that first defined

from 20th Century Fox, will be directed by Ridley (Blade Runner) Scott and stars Robert Redford. Filming is slated to begin July 5. Across town at Warner Brothers, Dustin Hoffman has signed onto *Outbreak*, from Wolfgang Peterson, the director of *Enemy Mine*. Both are medical thrillers dealing with mutant viruses and resulting catastrophic epidemics. The race is on to see who hits the theaters first, as both are scheduled for 1995 release.

While Paramount continues to play a close hand with details on such projects as *Star Trek VII: Generations* and the new *Voyager* television series, SF fans who are wired into the internet have been passing a fully detailed plot synopsis of the former that seems to be legit, as well as a file compiling all known information about the series. Since we here at SFE are more into hard news than plot spoilers, we'll leave it to our readers to find their way to the internet newsgroup alt.fan.startrek, where these files are frequently reposted.

But we do know how to tease without spoiling: the plot concerns an "energy ribbon" created by a mad Vulcan scientist named Soran (Malcolm McDowell), who traps Captains Kirk (William Shatner) and Picard (Patrick Stewart) in a sort of time funnel. There will not be a wholesale meeting between the two *Enterprise* crews; James Doohan and Walter Koenig have been signed to reprise their roles as Scotty and Chekov, but that's it for the old guard. All of the *Next Generation* cast will be featured, in what's obviously the first salvo of an ongoing *Next Generation* film series franchise; expect yet another design for the venerable *Starship Enterprise* to show up, this one meant to carry the *New Generation* cast to its own series of galactic adventures, the second of which should be filming as you read. If postproduction keeps to schedule, we'll see the \$25 million *Generations* in theaters near Thanksgiving of this year.

*Voyager* is now set to launch in January as the cornerstone of Paramount Television's "fifth network." At this writing, 36 stations have signed on, covering 47 percent of the country. Since the network will be active only on Mondays and Tuesdays, the new *Trek* series will air on one of those nights. As reported in *Variety*, the storyline follows the exploits of the crew and passengers of the starship *Voyager*, who, in the course of a battle with "maqui" rebels, find themselves hurled into uncharted space on the far side of the galaxy, along with their intended targets. The maquis and the Federation loyal-



Mrs. Pickman (Frances Bay) undergoes a Lovecraftian transformation in John Carpenter's *In the Mouth of Madness*.

"cyberpunk." Then word came that Gibson had written the script for the next *Aliens* sequel—but that was scotched when the Powers that Be decided to go with a storyline that brings Sigourney Weaver's character back from the dead for the next such outing.

This summer, Gibson's been showing up at sci-fi cons bubbling with enthusiasm for the production, and with stills in hand—hard proof at last that pure Gibson (he adapted his own story for the screen) is headed our way. New York artist Robert Longo is directing, and the ultrahip cast includes: Keanu Reeves as Johnny, a chip-implemented information courier; Dolph Lundgren as Street Preacher, a bounty hunter after Johnny's information-rich head; and rapper Ice T as the leader of the "loteks," a band of rebels opposed to the evils of technocracy. Hardcore music champion Henry Rollins also appears. Let's hope that *Mnemonic* is successful enough to make *Neuromancer* a hot property again.

Two upcoming big-budget projects are banging heads with remarkably parallel themes. *Crisis in the Hot Zone*,

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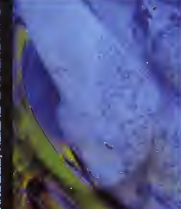
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Filed in Romania, director Sam Irvin's sci-fi Western, *Oblivion* was shot back-to-back with a sequel.

ists ally in order to find their way back home, running into strange new worlds aplenty en route.

The rumor mill brings word of trouble on Universal's costly epic *Waterworld*, the first dip into sci-film by actor Kevin Costner. Conceived as "Road Warrior on water," the setting is a future Earth whose polar icecaps have melted, deluging the planet. Costner plays a super hero named Mariner, whose gill-and-fin equipped body enables him to protect a group of rag-tag innocents living on a floating colony from violent attacks by the ruthless consortium in control of the Earth's oil reserves and power sources.

But it's not the film's storyline that's generating controversy, it's the budget, which is rumored to have escalated to a staggering \$100 million, a figure hotly denied by Universal's president, Tom Pollock. Although Costner himself was reportedly paid \$14 million for his involvement, the primary money-squeezer here simply seems to be the complicated outdoor sets—floating ones, surrounded by ocean water—built in a Hawaiian harbor. Word is that defective pontoons and inclement weather have caused severe maintenance problems; unconfirmed are reports that entire sets have disappeared into the briny. *Waterworld's* set problems should be familiar stuff to veteran brass at Universal—seafaring shenanigans on *Jaws* and its various sequels have been comparatively arduous and costly. The ocean, unlike most of Hollywood, is unique in that it can't be controlled.

Director Sam Irvin, whose well-reviewed feature debut *Guilty as Charged* showed how much he'd learned during his years working with Brian DePalma, has turned his hand to space opera with *Oblivion*, a cowboys-and-alien sci-fi Western, shot in Romania, back-to-back with its sequel, *Oblivion 2*. Based on

a story idea by executive producer Charles Band, and budgeted a tad more lavishly than Band's usual video fodder, the project has been elevated by Irvin into an in-joke-ridden satirical romp, with Richard Joseph Paul as a heroic "empath" embroiled in a battle with an evil gang that's taken over *Oblivion*, a small town on a nameless planet. Filled with appearances by such beloved genre icons as George "Mr. Sulu" Takei, Carel Struycen from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and Julie "Catwoman" Newmar (as "Miss Kitty," appropriately enough), word has it that *Oblivion* is hilarious and boasts top-notch stop-motion creatures animated by David Allen. The film snagged a Gold Award for best fantasy/horror film at the Houston International Film Festival this spring; catch it early in its quick pass through theaters this August, on its way to the quick video release that is the fate of all Charlie Band projects.

Sad News Department: the proposed remake of *The Mummy* that Joe Dante was anxious to direct is now officially shelved. The homage-happy director had intended to feature both Christopher Lee and Turhan Bey in his cast (the two gentlemen who, respectively, starred in the 1963 and 1936 *Mummy* features).

*Halloween 666: The Origin of Michael Meyers*, which was actually starting to sound like an interesting project for a while, has taken a left turn into dullsville. The Powers That Be, whose ham-handed handling has managed to turn Carpenter's suspenseful original into one of the lowest-quality splatter franchises, recently canned producer Quentin Tarantino (of *Reservoir Dogs* fame), which prompted Tarantino's director of choice Scott Spiegel (co-screenwriter of *Evil Dead II*) to quit. Perhaps with an increased budget, executive producer Moustapha Akkad could buy a clue....



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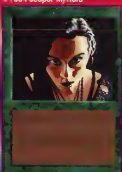
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Can Ed Wood be mainstreamed? Martin Landau, as Bela Lugosi in his final, declining years, and Johnny Depp as the director gifted by incompetence.

Showtime obviously has a clue; Tarantino and Dante were two of the directors signed for their "Rebel Highway" series of biker pictures, along with Jonathan Kaplan and William Friedkin. The series will consist entirely of remakes of American-International exploitation pictures. First up is Friedkin's *Jail Breakers*, starring professional bad girl Shannen Doherty.

Touchstone Pictures is facing a marketing problem with Tim Burton's upcoming biopic of legendary writer/director/transvestite Ed Wood. Although advance word on this slice from the life of the inept genius behind *Bride of the Monster* and *Plan Nine From Outer Space* is extremely good, Disney execs are baffled by how to sell it and were even considering shelving it for lack of marketing ideas. Current word puts the film's debut in November.

In related news, *Plan 10 From Outer Space*, which writer-director Trent Harris has attempted to launch for years, is now in production in Salt Lake City, no doubt finally financed by backers anxious to cash in on a new wave of Woodmania. Those hungry for a genuine dose of Wood can turn to the video release of *Necromania*, a long-lost Wood epic recently unearthed by Something Weird Video and Frankenhooker writer/director Frank Henenlotter, and set to release on SWV's specialty label, Henenlotter's Sexy Shockers From the Vault. "We found it practically by accident," says Henenlotter, "and the print is missing maybe 10 minutes of its original running time, including the credits. But it's unmistakably Wood. No one else wrote dialogue like that." Nevertheless, Henenlotter has shown the picture to Rudolph Grey, author of the Ed Wood biography *Nightmare of Ecstasy*, and he has verified the film as authentic Wood.

The *Puppet Masters*, Robert A. Heinlein's classic novel of Earth's conquest by parasitic aliens, has recently finished shooting in

Canada, with Brit director Stuart Orme directing and starring Donald Sutherland, who must be having flashbacks to his days on the set of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Expect a title change prior to release, in order to avoid confusion with Charlie Band's similarly-titled killer-puppet movies. Among titles under consideration: *One, The Strangers, Dominion*, and our personal favorite, *Robert Heinlein's The Puppet Masters*.

The doomsday thriller *Meltdown* began filming in May, on location at a nuclear power plant in Vienna. The John Carpenter screenplay concerns a resourceful Navy SEAL, played by Dolph Lundgren, pitted against a gang of nuclear terrorists. John Dahl, whose last was the "Western noir" *Red Rock West*, directs. Carpenter's latest feature, *In the Mouth of Madness*, is now set for a September 9th release; the film stars Sam Neil as an insurance investigator caught up in a desperate search for a horror novelist whose latest work wreaks havoc on anyone who dares read it.

Universal has announced two *Darkman* sequels, with Arnold Vosloo taking over the Liam Neeson role. Meanwhile, Disney has released *The Return of Jafar*, an animated sequel to *Aladdin*. Sorry if you love the big screen; all three of these films are intended for release straight to video.

The world is strange, my friends, and for the getting stranger department: Few people in the audience were aware of it, but in the recent smash *The Crow*, seven scenes featuring Brandon Lee were made without the late actor's participation. Dream Quest Images created composite images, sometimes pasting Lee's face onto a stunt double, and on other occasions matting the actor's full image (taken from alternate takes) into a scene. It occurs to me: while they were at it, couldn't they have found a small role for his father? □

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By Dane Spotts

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# We interrupt this telecast for a message from the future!

BY MAX LANSING

**W**ELCOME TO COMMLINK SATELLITE SERVICE. You have selected *Faster Than Light Newsfeed* for today, 15 July...2144." When you hear these words, you have officially entered a new dimension of global political upheaval, dizzying environmental change, incredible scientific advancement and problematic ethnic relations. Welcome to the 22nd century. ■ You have seen the future, and it is getting shorter.

That's why each day you can receive 60-second news reports from 150 years in the future on *FTL (Faster Than Light) Newsfeed*, the Sci-Fi Channel's acclaimed fictional news feature. The design of this 60-second daily short-form interstitial news update is based upon the massive

anchor goes through many metamorphoses and takes on various forms, thanks to hi-tech wizardry, computer-generated graphics and 3-D animation.

In the imagination of the creators of *FTL Newsfeed*, the universe of 2144 is a highly complex one. The world has realigned into five powerful economic combines: the European Community (EC), the Asian Prosperity Sphere (APS), the Islamic Federation (IF), the Hispanic Commonwealth (HC) and the North American Economic Union (NAU), formerly the United States and Canada.

Despite tremendous problems—from the collapse of cities to the disassociation created by a society living much of its existence in virtual space—there is still some hope for the future and faith in human adventure. A network of space stations and microwave generators orbit the Earth. Earthlings' love of sports thrives at the Floaterball World Series. The spirit of ingenuity, creativity and discovery still flourish.

Futuristic concerns are startling: DNA alteration, bio-merging, nanobiomorphing, clones, identity chips, doomsday asteroids, cults controlled by artificial intelligence and police states. News reports depict a galaxy where the mandatory retirement age is 80, but that does not stop seniors from using holographic makeovers and falsifying birth records to extend their employability. All five combines control Cenbank, a central clearinghouse for economic transactions between the powers that acts as an arbiter of financial disputes.

There is a myriad of political parties, such as the Unified Party, Privacy Party and Realist Party, springing from the seeds of unrest and protest. Virtual reality (VR) addiction is the biggest social disease. People who get hooked go to VR clinics for recovering addicts. Reports describe the failure of "macroweather" climate control experiments, proving that mother nature is as much of an unpredictable force in the future as it is in the present, and instigating charges of meteorological treason. Dating in the VR net has made sexually transmitted diseases a thing of the past, but when teenagers begin forsaking VR sex for the real thing, parents start worrying. Elvis Presley clones escape from their Hollywood manufacturer.

Followers of *FTL* meet a legion of fascinating figures on the show: Madeline Clarke, the idealistic but ruthless president of the NAU; Barton Poole, the director of Cenbank; Dr. Kristeen Ballard, the brilliant chief scientist for

*Continued on page 67*



*Direct from Commlink, Earth's orbital news center, all the news a 22nd century citizen needs.*

amounts of information that would need to be communicated during a 60-second newscast of tomorrow. Layers of supporting information and typography are combined with live-on-tape style news anchor reports, interviews, sound bites, weather reports and more, all created with a uniquely different, visually arresting style. The look of the show is so unusual that it has merited the feature's editor a nomination for the Industry Monitor Award for short subjects. And the stories are realistically presented. If you did not know better, you would swear they were happening now.

*FTL Newsfeed* is transmitted from the Commlink Satellite, a huge solar-powered platform in Earth's orbit which provides hundreds of interactive and communications services. Set in a virtual reality newsroom, *FTL* provides information delivered by a virtual reporter. Actor Joe McKenna portrays this holographic newsmen, which takes the form of a computer-generated image inside an electronic background, a la *Max Headroom*. The



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*The screenwriter of Jurassic Park and the director of Highlander revive a pulp legend.*

# ***The Shadow Takes Shape***

Darkness never dies. It always lingers at the edge of light, waiting for its moment of inevitable return.

Take *The Shadow*. Six decades may have aged a fellow of such stature but The Shadow still knows “what fear lurks in the hearts of men,” and this summer a whole new generation will be introduced to one of America’s most beloved pulp fiction heroes as he’s transformed into pop culture with a big-budget Universal release starring Alec Baldwin in the title role.

“The Shadow is much more than your so-called super hero—this is definitely not going to be Captain America,” promises director Russell Mulcahy (*Highlander*) who had the formidable task of bringing the character to the screen after the film’s decade-plus development process. “The Shadow is much more real than a guy putting on a zany costume and running around. When you talk about Lamont Cranston, you’re talking about a very complex character. There is so much background material on him that it gives him blood and really breathes life into him.”

BY DON E. PETERSON



*Alec Baldwin stars as the mystic powered avenger, in Universal's **The Shadow**, scheduled for a July release.*



When Walter Gibson (under the pen name Maxwell Grant) first envisioned the mysterious man who had the ability to "cloud men's minds" back in the '30s dime store detective novels, he was a dark-hearted hero whose own ideas about justice were far from socially responsible (and definitely not politically correct). Through his various incarnations, including the popular radio show, motion picture serials, and his own comic book, The Shadow managed to retain an edge that even his knock-offs (like Batman) couldn't quite match.

"There's this taint of evil that made him very interesting," explains producer Martin Bregman. "Before the radio show, there were over three hundred pulp magazine books, and that's where The Shadow came from and what made him a fascinating character. He was a character fighting the evil within himself. That's what makes him a very theatrical character and a very interesting one at that."

After many screenwriters tackled the complexities of The Shadow's latest rebirth, Bregman notes that it wasn't until David Koepp (*Jurassic Park*) arrived, in early 1990,

that the movie finally found the correct tone.

"Thematically the earlier drafts didn't work," explains Bregman. "Some of them were light, some of them were darker, and others were supposedly funnier—which they weren't. It just didn't work. No one really could get this guy, and it never had the size it should have had. David finally wrote *The Shadow* as this enormous character. He came up with the right script, and part of it was, he went back to the original material."

**W**ith a wealth of background knowledge from his fond memories of listening to rebroadcasts of the old radio show when he was a kid, Koepp found the character pretty easy to peg. However, condensing his expansive history into one movie was the hard part.

"Basically I picked the characters and villains from the pulp novels and I took the tone of the radio show and made up my own story," says Koepp. "I saw this as an adventure in the classic sense and a bit of mythmaking."

Koepp cites as inspiration the biblical tale of the complete personal transformation "of Saul on the road to Damascus. I thought *The Shadow* was a classic story about dread, guilt and redemption. I wanted to start the movie showing where the bizarre character originated and then show him on an adventure as his past comes to haunt him. I would say it's equal parts mythmaking, and I thought its





'30s time frame made it a natural for a snappy, '30s-style type of dialogue."

Creating a background for the character was also liberating since, according to Koepp, the origins were only vaguely alluded to in early days.

"It's hard any time you're creating a legend, but this gave us the opportunity to go back and create our own back story for him," says Koepp. "Finding the conceptual key for the character was important. Superman is for truth, justice and the American way; Batman, I think, is revenge; and *The Shadow*, I felt, was guilt. It's about a man coming to terms with his dual nature. It was Jekyll and Hyde more than anything else. It was the idea that both good and evil exist in the same person."

Unlike most movies, producer Bregman notes that very few actors were considered for the part of *The Shadow*. In the initial stages, Jeremy Irons' name was thrown around (other rumors throughout the years even had Roy Scheider mentioned as a potential heir to the pulp hero's throne), but Koepp admits he always unconsciously felt Alec Baldwin personified what the character was about.

**A**ctually, I try to specifically not have anyone cast in my mind while writing because you have to tailor the role for an actor soon enough—you may as well keep the character himself or herself for as long as you can," says Koepp. "However, I had admired



Alec Baldwin for some time and he crept into my mind when writing because he's a terrific actor and his eyes and voice are much suited to Lamont Cranston. Once I thought of him early on, I couldn't get him out of my head; he just became *The Shadow* to me. The fact that we actually got our first choice was delightful, because you never get your first choice."

Having Baldwin accept was a pleasant surprise for Bregman as well, since he notes, "Most actors are reluctant to play what they think is a cartoon character."

"Alec saw beyond that," says Bregman. "And he is everything this character should be—a macho guy, very good looking, and intelligent."

For the film, Cranston is pitted against one of the pulp novel's most dangerous foes—Shivan Khan (John Lone), a descendant of Genghis Khan who wants to succeed where his ancestor failed.

"These movies are always defined by their villain, and in the books I was struck by Shivan Khan," says Koepp. "I like him because he was bold and he knew what he was doing—he wanted to conquer the world. That was very simple, maybe a little ambitious, but he knew exactly what

**ABOVE LEFT:** At work in his laboratory, scientist Reinhardt Lane (Ian McKellan) is unaware that his fellow researcher Farley Claymore (Tim Curry) is in league with nefarious powers.

**ABOVE:** *The Shadow's* great adversary Shivan (John Lone), the last living descendant of the Mongol warrior Genghis Khan, in full battle regalia.

**OPPOSITE:** Leaden death sprays the screen as Claymore reveals his true allegiance to Shivan Khan.

# LANDING

by Michael Whelan



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he wanted. He also felt a sense of family obligation. Genghis didn't finish the job. There was also the idea that Cranston and Khan had the same master. So the villain has the hero's powers as well. Besides, it's no great accomplishment for The Shadow to beat up on a couple of local punks. You have to import somebody who knows what he knows and who is evenly matched."

Rounding out the cast is a wealth of character actors, including Peter Boyle as a cab driver, acting as one of The Shadow's many secret urban agents, Tim Curry as the nefarious Khan cronie Farley Claymore, Jonathan Winters as Cranston's police commissioner uncle, and Penelope Ann Miller as Margot Lane, Cranston's bright young love interest.

"Penelope is a lovely actress and she's of the time somehow," says Bregman, who worked with the actress previously on *Carlito's Way*. "And she fits the clothes of that period as well."

While *The Shadow* hardly sounds like a movie with a prerequisite for groundbreaking effects work, the recent computer-generated craze did aid in the film's production in many ways, including the creation of many of the various, complex shadow effects.

"How do you shoot a shadow?" questions Bregman. "How do you light it? You can't really control it, so we basi-

cally did it all by computers. It's a whole new world added to filmmaking."

Visual effects supervisor Alison Savitch is no stranger to state-of-the-art visual effects, having served in a similar capacity on *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *Dracula*.

"I'll tell you, budget-wise and conceptually, *The Shadow* was not intended to be an effects film," says Savitch. "We only had something in the range of 50 to 70 shots. Now some people can say it's an effects film because we ended up with 230 effects shots, which gets us up there with *Star Wars*."

**W**hile the shadows were created digitally so that "you could have control and consistency over them and could tweak and animate to the desired effect in the CG (computer-generated) realm," Savitch also found the rapidly developing process now capable of having CG-created characters or objects interact in the live action with believable results.

"When I was doing *T2*, the CG digital realm wasn't as advanced," says Savitch. "Then, they were charging \$100,000 for a morph. Now 14-year-old children are doing morphs on their Macintoshes with an \$89-dollar program. So things that were tough five years ago, are much easier. Now they're coming up with other problems to solve. On this film we have things flying through the movie at one point which would be very difficult to create without the CG realm. These elements are completely CG-created and integrated in a similar way to the composites in *Roger Rabbit*. It's lit completely in the live action arena and completed with the computer—which was really difficult before."

Creating a 1930s New York was even more impressive with extra large miniatures providing a perfect substitution.

# THE SHADOW CHRONOLOGY

The following is an abridged chronology detailing the evolution, through several media, of *The Shadow*, compiled with the help of Guy Gudin.

Gudin, a longtime collector of *Shadow* material, is now at work on a book entitled *Who Knows What Evil*. The book is an updated edition of *The Shadow Scrapbook*, written by *Shadow* creator Walter Gibson and Anthony Tollin in 1979.

Commentary below is from Gudin.

**1930** • A weekly radio program entitled *Detective Story Hour* debuts, featuring a narrator only revealed as "The Shadow." His voice entices listeners to purchase the latest issue of *Detective Story* magazine from publishers Street and Smith.

**1931** • Walter Gibson (under the pseudonym Maxwell Grant) creates *The Shadow* in answer to reader demand. Soon after, the first pulp fiction novel entitled *The Living Shadow* appears. Gibson ultimately wrote almost 300 of the 325 subsequent novels.

"He was told to write under the pseudonym because Street and Smith owned the character. They could assign it to anybody—if they wanted someone else to pick up the character they could."

• Universal Pictures' *Shadow Detective* series makes it to the big screen as a series of six two-reelers (*Burglar to the Rescue*, *The Cat's Paw*, *Sealed Lips*, *House of Mystery*, *The Red Shadow*, *The Circus Show-up*). The character serves only as narrator.

**1932** • *The Shadow* hits the airwaves with the first season of his own radio show, though he remains solely a narrative voice. Robert Hardy Andrews provides the voice of The Shadow, with actor Frank Readick, Jr. taking over for season two and three.

**1937** • The big screen finally welcomes The Shadow in his first full-length motion picture; Grand National Pictures presents *The Shadow Strikes*, featuring Rod La Rocque as both The Shadow and Lamont Cranston.

• In the 131st novel, *The Shadow Unmasks*, readers finally learned one of The Shadow's secret identities, that of Lamont Cranston.

• The voice for *The Shadow's* radio series during season four and two summer seasons is provided by 22-year-old Orson Welles. For the first time, the character breaks from his narrator role to take an active part in the radio play's storyline.

"Orson Welles' own love of magic seemed to pour over into the character of The Shadow. He made many references to where he learned these powers and made frequent mention of hypnotizing and how he made himself invisible, which later Shadows took for granted and didn't expand upon as much."

**1938** • Rod La Rocque plays Lamont Cranston in the Grand National feature film *The International Crime*, which ironically

enough doesn't feature The Shadow at all. It's based on the 1937 novel *Fox Hound*, written by one of Gibson's first fill-in authors, Theodore Tinsley.

• Bill Johnstone takes over the role of The Shadow for season five through season nine of the radio broadcasts.

**1939** • Archvillain Shiwan Kahn first appears in the pulp novel *The Golden Master*.

**1940** • Victor Jory stars in *The Shadow*, a 15-chapter movie serial for Columbia.

• The Shadow appears in his first comic book, *The Shadow Comics*, 64 pages, from Street and Smith.

• A daily newspaper strip debuts.

**1943** • Season 10 introduces radio fans to Bret Morrison as The Shadow, who will retain the role to the radio series' end in 1954.

"He was the most popular to play the character because he was The Shadow for 10 whole years."

**1949** • Paperback novels kill the market for pulp originals; *The Shadow* is finally cancelled in this format.

**1954** • Season 21 marks the final run of *The Shadow* radio broadcasts.

**1963** • *The Shadow* undergoes a revival, with nine paperback novels published.

**1964** • Archie Comics brings back the hero in a new-fangled super-hero kind of way, mercifully cancelled after a brief run.

• The old shows are rebroadcast, initially as an exercise in "nostalgia," but the drama captures a whole new audience.

**1969** • Bantam Books reprints seven of *The Shadow* novels in paperback form.

**1973** • Returning to comic books, The Shadow is placed in the era that made him famous—the '30s—in a DC Comics series conceived by Mike Kaluta and lasting for 12 issues.

"The Shadow also appeared in a couple issues of DC's *Batman* comics. *Batman* was actually inspired by The Shadow,

but they could never actually say that, so when they got the licensing of the character, DC had a young Bruce Wayne showing the involvement of The Shadow in his life."

**1979** • The definitive book on the famed character gets the royal treatment in *The Shadow Scrapbook*, written and compiled by Gibson himself and definitive *Shadow* specialist Anthony Tollin.

**1982** • Producer Martin Bregman buys the rights to *The Shadow* and spends the next 12 years developing the script. Early on, Jeremy Irons is considered for the lead role.

**1986** • Once again DC tries out a *Shadow* comic. Howard Chaykin scripts a four-issue modern-day version of the character.

**1987** • DC offers up an even more revisionist series by Andrew Helfer and artist Bill Sienkiewicz. According to Gudin, The Shadow dies, is frozen, and dons an electronic head to become "robo-shadow," in what may have been the character's darkest hours.

**1989** • DC sees the error of its ways and presents what is considered the finest comic adaptation to date, entitled *The Shadow Strikes*, written by Gerard Jones. It lasts for 31 issues.

• Eternity Comics comes out with the monthly *Crime Classics*, which reprints some of the classic '40s *Shadow* comics.

**1990** • Screenwriter David Koepp (who later goes on to write *Jurassic Park*) finally comes up with a *Shadow* script that pleases the Powers That Be and preproduction soon begins.

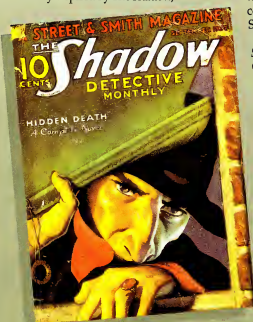
**1993** • Filming commences on *The Shadow* under the direction of *Highlander* director Russell Mulcahy. Alec Baldwin stars as The Shadow and Cranston and John Lone plays archvillain Shiwan Kahn.

• Dark Horse purchases rights to the character and releases a four-part limited series entitled *In The Coils of Leviathan*. Mike Kaluta, who worked on the 1973 version of the comic, pens this series, which brings The Shadow back to the 1940's.

**1994** • Universal Pictures releases *The Shadow* in theaters; *Who Knows What Evil* by Guy Gudin hits bookstores; Dark Horse comics debuts a two-issue limited series adaptation of the film.

"Ultimately I think the character endures because he appeals to the dark side in all of us. Also, no two Shadows have ever been the same. The radio Shadows and the pulp Shadows were always at odds. This film seems to be somewhere in the middle and incorporates elements of everything, including some of the various revisionist takes on The Shadow. It's a real crazy quilt. The Shadow is a character that has never been fully explored in the modern sense and we certainly hope this film will capture that feeling."

Source: *The Shadow Scrapbook* by Walter Gibson and Guy Gudin







No longer soft-spoken Lamont Cranston, *The Shadow* and his blazing .45s take on the forces of evil with a vengeance.

"We call them maxitures, because there are 14 buildings as high as 28 feet, and they create quite a scope and scale for the movie," says Savitch. "In addition, there are quite a number of matte paintings, since New York of the '30s doesn't exist. We needed a way to create that with minia-tures and mattes. What's interesting is that Russell has a real vision for what he wants to do, and he's taking advantage of modern technology and integrating it to fit into a 1930s'-styled film to show things never seen before."

**H**aving written the screenplays for both *Jurassic Park* and *Death Becomes Her*, Koepf is very well aware of how computer technology has broadened a screenwriter's canvas in ways that mind-altering drugs couldn't touch.

"The best comment I got from Steven Spielberg while working on *Jurassic* was when he said that my limitations were my imagination," says Koepf. "I think it's a great summary of how you should write for fantasy or adventure movies—just cut loose. If they can't do it, they'll tell you. I remember specifically writing one line of description in *Jurassic* where it says, 'the T-Rex runs down the Gallimimus and devours them in a cloud of dust,' and I thought, it took me 24 seconds to write that line, let's see if anybody can do this. And sure enough they did. *Jurassic* was such a watershed in terms of special effects and not just because of special techniques, but an overall attitude of 'we can do anything we want.' It's not even a crushing matter of money, because this stuff gets cheaper every time."

For Mulcahy, his involvement came during the filming of the Bregman-produced *The Real McCoy*, starring Baldwin's wife Kim Basinger.

"I've known about the project for 10 years and I knew about the character and was always fascinated by him," says Mulcahy. "The great thing is people don't have a definite image of who this person (*The Shadow*) is. They know the name and the tag line, so it was sort of nice and daunting and sort of a challenge to bring this character to the screen."

Shooting commenced last summer on the Universal Studios lot in Hollywood, occupying five of their soundstages for a 14-week shoot. Ultimately the final budget topped off around a very modest 40 million dollars.

"The key to the film is the combination of David Koepf bringing the script to life and Alec Baldwin for being born and growing up to play Cranston," says Mulcahy. "There's also the technology that's providing some of the effects. I think maybe 10 years ago we would have had a completely different movie. I think the times are now right for *The Shadow*. I remember I saw *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* when I was seven, and here you had this guy fighting giant cyclops and dragons and two-headed eagles, and I said to myself, 'I want to be able to do that and create magic.'"

While not even *The Shadow* knows how audiences will react to the pulp character's big-screen transformation (look at the disastrous results of its pulp-turned-pop cousins *Dick Tracy* and *Rocketeer*), Savitch feels that *The Shadow* has a better chance because it exists in its own special world.

"The difference is *The Shadow* is not relying on our parents' memory of the radio show or the comic book," concludes Savitch. "So it's pretty much the script that stands on its own. It's got intrigue, a love story, and it's got adventure. It basically touches on a number of different lives and integrates them into a good vs. evil story for the fate of the universe. So it pretty much goes beyond anything about the character that has come before it." □

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# Disney

This summer *The Lion King* hopes to continue the dominance of its full-blooded flesh-and-bone

## unleashes

ancestors. However, the battle will not be waged in the wilds, but at the box office.

## its much-anticipated

"This movie is really unlike any other movie made at Disney before, for a number of reasons,"

## 32nd

explains Disney chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg. "To start with, it's not based on a classic fairy tale

## full-length

or a piece of literature. It was created internally by our story artists. It's also the first animated

## feature

Disney movie in which there are no human beings or human influences in it. Even in *Bambi*,

## animated

which would be the one closest to this film, human beings played a very important role."

## film.

With an African backdrop, *The Lion King's* plot turns upon the struggle within the family hierarchy of King Mufasa (voiced by James Earl Jones) and his jealous brother Scar (Jeremy Irons), who is anxiously awaiting his brother's demise and his own ascension to the throne. However, young cub Simba is born, becoming the new royal heir. Jealousy, back-stabbing and coming of age are all in store for Simba as he deals with his father's death and

the guilt he carries with him, which may prevent him from becoming the Lion King.

"This is a journey all of us take, the transition from childhood into adulthood," says Roger Allers, who co-directed the film alongside Rob Minkoff. "It doesn't always happen at a particular age, it usually happens by way of some important event, and it's different for each and every one of us. For some, it's the birth of a child and

the sense of responsibility that brings. For others, it comes with the loss of someone who is very dear and important in your life. For Simba, it is compounded by the fact that not only is this a very tough moment with the loss of his father, but he has to grow up carrying the burden that he's responsible for his death and that is an extraordinary piece of his past he must come to terms with."

The road for Disney animation is

BY CURT WELLS

# The Lion King





**P**umbaa is actually the first Disney character to (break wind) in a movie, though there actually was a flatulent character in *Snow White*.

usually a long and winding one, averaging around four years of development for each feature (excepting, of course, Disney's direct-to-video *Aladdin* sequel, *The Return of Jafar*, which was cranked out in about six months). *The Lion King's* first cub-steps into production began with its animators observing closely the traits and characteristics of real lions, actually trekking to East Africa during early preproduction.

Animator Andreas Deja, responsible for designing and creating Scar (and many other Disney villains, including Jafar from *Aladdin* and Gaston from *Beauty and the Beast*), observes that one of the main challenges for all the animators was creating three-dimensional animal creations, in a less cartoony approach than used in past animated features.

"Most of the movies that we have done before were with humans," explains Deja. "I had even done Roger Rabbit way back, but the way he acts is like a human character. So this was going to be real lions, not cartoon lions.

How do you make them laugh? Obviously I couldn't have Scar stand up on two legs and have him gesturing. He has to stay on the ground. What do you do?"

Of course, scaring the animation team half to death is always a good idea, so a full-grown male lion, a female and a cub were brought into the animation studios for observation.

"Mind you, there was no fence, this was all in our studio with our easels and there was a lion," muses Deja. "We had all gone to zoos and sketched them there, but usually you go to a zoo and the animals are asleep in the shade; these were right there, so we could get an idea of their size and majesty and all the weight they had. So it was extremely important for us to be this close to these animals, especially to learn the way they move and look."

This process produced a whole sketchbook of guidelines showing lions in all sorts of positions and angles, in order to fill out a 'vocabulary' of their behavior.

With Disney well aware that their movies are only as good as their villains, casting the proper vocal talent was a priority. Jeremy Irons proved to be the purrfect combination for Scar.

Once he was signed, Deja then attempted to bring some of the actor's own facial characteristics into the mix.

"The problem I was faced with was, 'how do I make a lion out of this guy?'" says Deja. "So before I started, I watched some of Jeremy's movies and looked at photographs and stills and felt there was something I could use in the design of Scar. There is a certain eeriness around his eyes and he has these sharp lips. So there was something graphically there I could use. It doesn't always work out this way."

Producer Don Hahn took the same care in casting the vocal talent for the rest of the film. Well aware that nabbing Robin Williams for the voice of the genie in *Aladdin* was a wise choice (it definitely added extra box-office life), he naturally hired Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin for comic relief in *The Lion King*, to voice a pair of dark-humored laughing hyenas.

"They're the villain's sidekicks," says Hahn. "And for the first time ever we have the on-screen comic duo of Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin—it's a high-concept thing. They basically hang out with a hyena named Ed, who just loves to laugh at their jokes."





LEFT: Young cub Simba, heir to the throne, is seen as an obstacle by his jealous uncle Scar, who schemes to take control for his own evil purposes. ABOVE: Rafiki, a wise and mystical baboon, offers advice to Simba's father, King Mufasa.

with Menken to finish songs for *Aladdin*. For *The Lion King* he was ultimately paired with super-musician Elton John.

"We wrote seven songs for the film and, as always happens with Disney movies, not everything made it into the final cut," says Rice. Five numbers did make it onto the soundtrack, including the upbeat "Just Can't Wait To Be King," the hyena song "Be Prepared," the requisite ballad poised for Top 40 over-exposure "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," and "Circle of Life."

The final piece of Disney's huge animation puzzle was completed through computer-generated technology. One of the most valuable enhancements that computers have offered the art of animation is an unlimited palette of colors ranging in the thousands, as opposed to the precomputer era of animation that was generally limited to a few more than 200. Additionally, computer breakthroughs have paved the way for what is said to be a dazzling animation feat, a 2 1/2 minute high-energy sequence depicting a stampede of wildebeests.

"It's really the first time we've used a computer to do a living, breathing flesh-and-bone character," explains Hahn, who notes *Beauty and the Beast*'s ballroom sequence and *Aladdin*'s rug were Disney's first steps in computer animation. "We needed literally thousands and thousands of wildebeests to be animated, so what we did was use two-dimensional animation techniques and had people in the computer animation department create a three-dimensional model of the wildebeests and give each one its own path of action in order to create this herd."

In order to continue the Disney animation winning streak throughout the '90s, they've beefed up the animation production schedule so that 1995 will mark the first time two full-length animated features will be finished in the same year, with the release of *Pocahontas* scheduled for summer and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* for Christmas. Of course, the push Disney is giving *The Lion King* may make anything following in its wake even harder to top. Director Allers contends that there will always be Disney animated features as long as there are stories to tell and strong emotional themes audiences can relate to.

"The theme of *The Lion King* is responsibility," Allers says. "I think if we look back at the last couple of movies, we've worked very hard to put a strong theme in them. *The Little Mermaid* was about our children and how they should be free to live their own life. *Aladdin* was about being true to one's self, and *The Lion King* is about each generation's responsibility as the torchbearers for the next generation, and taking your place in the circle of life."

The always-joking Lane sees the expected success of *The Lion King* in another way. Describing the meaning of the song Timon and Pumbaa sing, Lane offers, "It's a sort of put-on-a-happy-face kind of number." He then smiles and adds, virtually winking, "It's called 'Hakuna Matata,' which in Swahili means \$300 billion world-wide." □

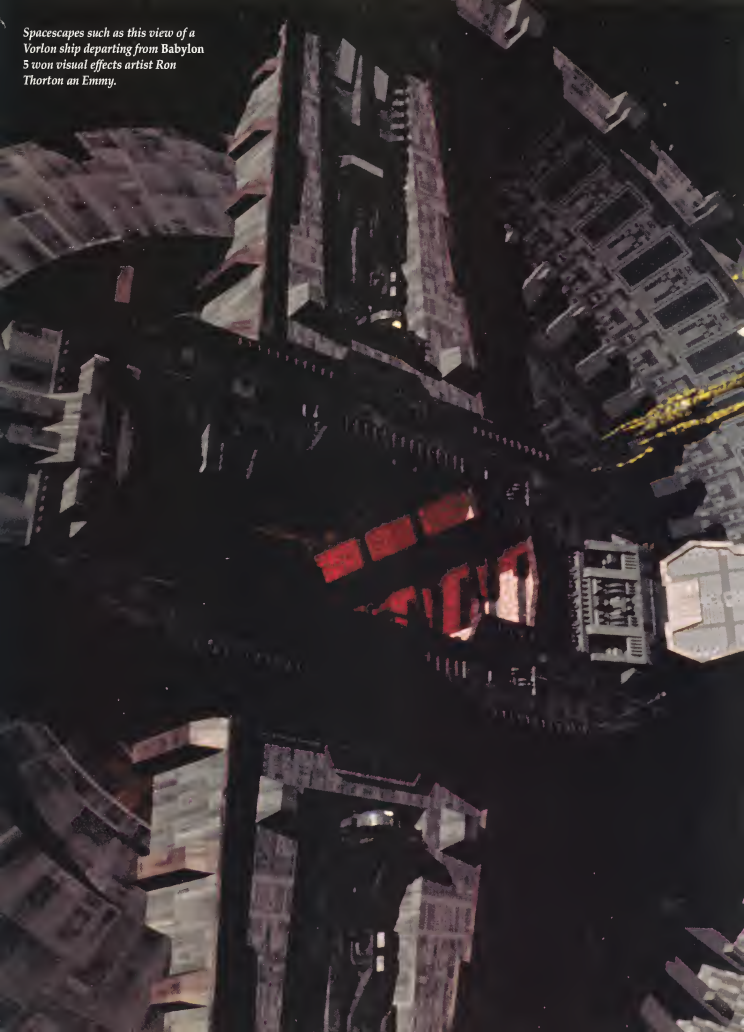
The comedy doesn't end there though (this movie is poised to outgross *Aladdin*, so expect everything to be twice as grand as its predecessor). There will also be additional laughs provided by the lovable team of dim-witted wart hog Pumbaa (Ernie Sabella) and meerkat Timon (Nathan Lane) in what Hahn describes as "our version of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern meet Ren and Stimpy."

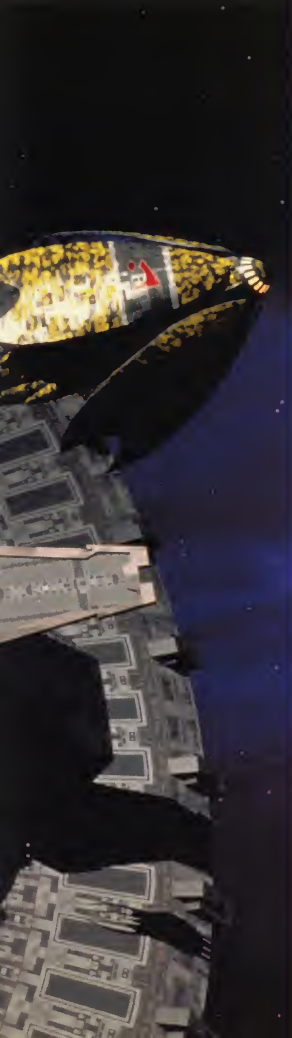
"Pumbaa is actually the first Disney character to (break wind) in a movie, though there actually was a flatulent character in *Snow White*," says Lane, setting up for an obvious punchline. "He was a dwarf called Stinky."

As for Timon, he explains that "meercats are like the prairie dog of South Africa and are known for their wonderful disposition and ability to perform elaborate musical numbers."

With the death of lyricist Howard Ashman, who worked closely with Alan Menken in creating the memorable musical numbers in *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Aladdin*, Disney was in the unfortunate position of finding another stable of solid songwriters to add to their fold. Tim Rice proved himself when he stepped in at the last minute to work

*Spacescapes such as this view of a  
Vorlon ship departing from Babylon  
5 won visual effects artist Ron  
Thorton an Emmy.*





John Vulich & Everett Burrell, behind the scenes of the  
Sci-Fi Series That 'Tries Harder.'

# The Alien Masters of BABYLON 5

BY ED FLIXMAN

**A**T THE OPENING OF EACH EPISODE OF *BABYLON 5*, Michael O'Hare, speaking as space station commander Jeffery Sinclair, suggests that we are about to enter a pancultural paradise, where the Earth Alliance and four alien alliances meet to work out their differences in peace. Together, the disparate species of the universe seek to answer the timeless question, once phrased by a 20th century resident of Los Angeles: "Can't we all just get along?"

But so far the reply seems to be, "Probably not." During the first full season of the show, we've been treated to a series of claustrophobic encounters with a spectrum of intergalactic cultures whose only common trait seems to be a distrustful sneakiness; and, despite the fact that Commander Sinclair fits the mold of the stereotypical space opera hero (that is, strong, wise, honorable and stiff), the station is run by an Earth government that remains, as ever, transfixed by goals of power and profit. Though Sinclair declares the station to be a "dream

taken form," few people have such dreams, unless aided by a sausage-and-pepper sandwich just before bed. It's a dense dream, with three or more plotlines aloft at any given juncture, a grimy dream, dressed in dust and electro-static...a dream that at any moment threatens to descend into nightmare.

This complexity and density is *Babylon 5*'s greatest strength—and its greatest weakness. Television viewers aren't accustomed to programming that demands prolonged attention, and first exposure to the program can

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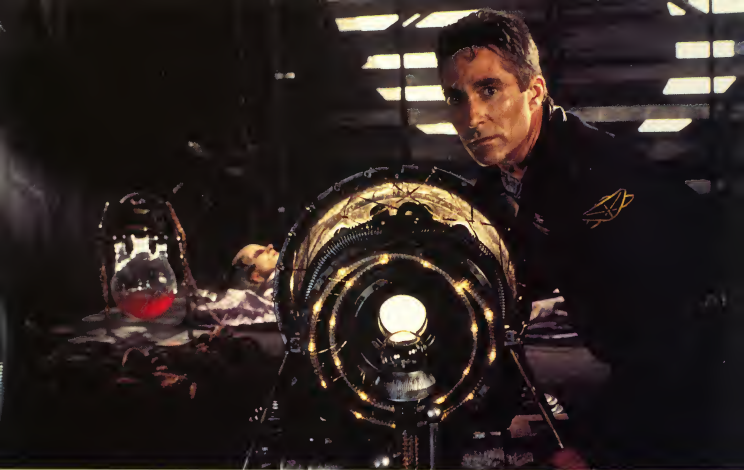
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Commander Jeffery Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) is an idealist struggling to cope with a less-than-ideal world.

be overwhelming. But advocates of the program applaud the manner in which the creators unfold, with greater detail in each episode, its vision of a future imperfect.

Populating this interplanetary crossroads with a convincing mix of the species that inhabit this alien universe is no easy task, particularly with budgets significantly trimmer than the well-known competition. This task is in the capable hands of Everett Burrell and John Vulich, the two principals of Optic Nerve Studios.

Though still young, Vulich, 32, and Burrell, 28, share between them some 20 years of makeup experience from working as staff for award-winners Rick Baker, Stan Winston, Greg Cannom and others, learning the techniques from the best in the business.

Optic Nerve had its start about four years ago, when Burrell called Vulich from Gettysburgh, Pennsylvania, where he'd been making casualties of Union and Confederate soldiers for the film *Glory*. "Everett had heard that Tom Savini was going to do makeup for Romero's *Two Evil Eyes*," Vulich recalls, "and, after that, word was that Savini would be directing a color remake of *Night of the Living Dead*. Everett figured that if we worked with Savini on the Romero film, we'd be in the best position to bid on the effects

job for *Night of the Living Dead*—and that's exactly what happened."

From the *NOLD* remake, it was a simple jump to makeup effects on George Romero's film version of Stephen King's *The Dark Half*. During that production, Optic Nerve acquired computer graphic equipment from NewTek, an outfit that specializes in transforming Amiga home computers into low-cost, high-end multimedia workstations. "We used the equipment primarily in the initial design phase of certain makeups on the film, but we heard through NewTek about the work that Ron Thornton was doing."

What Thornton was doing was earning an Emmy with his home computer—a souped-up home computer, perhaps, but an Amiga nevertheless. Thornton, *B5*'s visual effects supervisor, had initially planned to use NewTek's system as an aid to his effects design, prior to building physical models. To his surprise, he found the computer images he was generating of sufficient quality to abandon photographic techniques and proceed with purely computer-generated effects.

When Vulich and Burrell visited Thornton and saw the mammoth space station inside his computer, they immediately started thinking about the creatures that might be found inside of it. But John Criswell was already signed for the pilot's effects.

"However," Vulich recalls, "when

the season came around, either John had another commitment, or there was a failure to come to terms. Rob Brown, the original production manager, knew us from a previous project we'd worked on, so we were brought in.

"At the outset we were told that the producers wanted to concentrate on quality rather than quantity, and they'd decided to lessen the use of animatronics, which they felt had given the pilot too much of a 'muppet' look. Design-wise they wanted things grittier and more realistic, as opposed to a fantasy look."

From pilot to series, the most extensive revisions of prior work was done with the Minbari, principally represented by Mira Furlan as Ambassador Delenn.

"Culturally, the Minbari are like the Japanese, with their warrior faction, as well as a contemplative, almost Buddhist side to them. Ambassador Delenn, in the pilot, was meant to be a woman playing a man, to add to the alien nature of the species. But this was one thing that they felt didn't come off, so they decided to make her more feminine. We went back to some of the original concept sketches, by Steve Berg; he'd done an angelic-looking face, with wide cheeks; we followed that pretty closely, and then tried it without the chin piece, and it still worked, as just a forehead piece and teeny little ears, plus a blue spot

# ALIENS ACCORDING TO STRACZYNSKI

The following comments on the aliens of Babylon 5 are culled from a compilation of Straczynski's E-mail replies maintained by Dan Wood. (danwood@netcom.com), obtainable via Internet file transfer protocol at ftp.hyperion.com. Reprinted here by permission.

I strongly believe that there has to be diversity among our alien races...accents, political beliefs, religion, name it. I think that is VERY important. From time to time, you want the monolithic, perfectly homogeneous aliens, but if so, you want them to stick out a bit in contrast to the rest.

[Re: Non-humanoid (aliens)]—bear in mind, you still haven't seen what Kosh is inside that suit...others, very non-humanoid, will make their appearances down the road...and there's one race that has not yet been heard from, one shadow



A crowd of aliens mingle on Babylon 5, thanks to Optic Nerve.

government so secretive its existence is only whispered about, and when they make their appearance, and you finally see what they look like...well, let's just say that I've talked at some length with our EFX people, and it'll take about two years to work out how to do this and make it credible.

The basic "model" of the human form is very well tailored and may be more general than we might suspect. Legs for walking, probably two because all closed up sideways we present less of a silhouette for predators, and two legs are more nimble, can slip through narrower places than three. Arms to lift, and hands to manipulate objects (show me a culture without a good opposable thumb) required for the birth of technology. Sensors (eyes/ears/nose) at the very highest part of the body, best for observational purposes, hunting and the like.

There are zillions of species on Earth, but you've rarely seen anything above spider-level with more than six legs. Now, I'm not saying that it's impossible to have other forms, not at all...only that the humanoid form may in fact be far more common than anyone suspects.

The language facilities of aliens will vary;

probably the most fluent (by virtue of necessity) are the ambassadors, whose English is perfect or nearly so (cyberlink to the brain dumping the English equivalents of their own language and grammar directly into the brain, very expensive and not a little painful).

We've already instituted the need for translation devices on several characters. There are basically three dominant languages on B5, a kind of interstellar Esperanto, Centauri, and English, which is the more or less official military/diplomatic language. But not everyone is going to know those languages, so you need another way. We have translation teams (referenced though not seen in "Soul Hunter"), and physical translation devices for use after we've had sufficient contact with a given group or individual to be able to decode two languages into one another.

[Dialogue among aliens] won't be rare. And that's the reason why we're NOT doing subtitles. This is the difference between something sounding neat on paper, but not in reality, and especially not on a TV series.

## THE MINBARI

We're doing some minor modifications to G'Kar's prosthetic, making the chin less squared, the mouth a little broader, and the whole thing again easier to put on and take off. It will also look far more realistic; parts of it LOOKED like a prosthetic when you got up close.

For those who might be interested, we've come up with some names for the various clans of the Minbari warrior caste. The primary five are the Star Riders (the oldest), the Moon Shields, the Wind Swords, the Night Walkers and the Fire Wings. (The first three refer to the early Minbari version of a mounted force, for which you need riders with shields and swords, with number

four referring to foot soldiers, and the last to those whose clan first used flying machines in battle.)

The bone that grows out of the back of Delenn's head is exactly that, not a decoration, but an actual part of the physiology. It will differ with various Minbari in size, configuration and texture (another Minbari seen in the show has a darker tint to the bone structure, it's cracked and so on).

## THE CENTAURI

The closest parallel to the Centauri would, I suppose, be ancient Rome. I tend not to go that much to contemporary sources for metaphor, since it's too obvious and over-done. Much of what's in B5 is drawn from much older sources. The only exception, the only means of creating a metaphor for the present, is one that will take some time before it's even perceptible, though by the end of the season, you'll see what it is pretty clearly.

Centauri males wear their hair in this fashion, the length of which is determined by the person's status. Centauri women scorn such symbols of status and go bald except for a knot of hair from the back. (Sort of a peacock approach.)



Muta'do is one of several humanoid aliens created for the episode "T.K.O."

## THE VORLONS

We will reveal what Kosh is a LOT sooner than year five. Closer to the end of year two. Now that we've finished mixing some shows, we've now seen how Kosh speaks, followed through to the end. It's a very unusual system that he's got there, and it's 'real' creepy to watch/listen to it. The kind of thing that makes your skin crawl after a while.



Distinguished representatives (from left to right): Centauri Ambassador Londo Mollari (Peter Jurasik), Minbari Ambassador Delenn (Mira Furlan), Vorlon Ambassador Kosh Narane, and Narn Ambassador G'Kar (Andreas Katsulas).

pattern at the back of the head—a last-minute spur-of-the-moment addition. “With the male Minbari, we made their horns a bit more aggressive-looking—cracked and angled and so on—particularly in the case of the Minbari warriors—while the women’s horns have a sort of art deco look. We were speculating that the horns are probably identical in both races, but the women go and have theirs ground down and shaped, sort of like having a hairdo....

The Narn remain relatively unchanged from the pilot—but there were certain nerve-wracking aspects to the re-creation. “Andreas [Katsulas, who plays Ambassador G'Kar] was very insistent that we duplicate as much as possible the first makeup—he seemed to feel that if it didn’t match the original makeup exactly, it was going to somehow affect his performance. It was pretty nerve-wracking, because he’d come into the shop every once in a while and look at the unpainted work. It wasn’t until we actually got it glued on him, had it painted, and had the lenses popped in, that it all came together for him and he became a great deal happier.

“In modern terms, the Narn remind

me of the Israelis—a very peaceful group that, after years of being conquered and exploited, became warriors and nationalists. The Centauri, on the other hand, fit the pattern of any imperialist aggressor: England, Stalinist Russia, America. They’re a fallen race who once had a proud, opulent culture but are on the downward slide.

“The pilot featured the hairstyle that is a single, tall peacock-plumelike thing, which is a sign of rank in their society. Unfortunately, Peter Jurasik [Ambassador Londo Mollari] didn’t want to shave his head all the time, as he did for the pilot, so now we fit him with an entire headpiece.”

The last principal alien, Ambassador Kosh of the Vorlons, is an animatronic puppet, with a voice ‘designed’ by Chris Francke, the member of Tangerine Dream who is also the soundtrack’s composer and principal performer (replacing Stewart Copeland of the Police, who scored the pilot).

“We pretty much left Kosh alone,” says Vulich. “Except, after the first episode, we chopped off the curb-feelers he had—they were small, they were black, they used to break off all the time, they could hardly be noticed and they just got in the way, so they had to go! And, as I expected, no one ever noticed.”

J.M. Straczynski has laid out some heavy hints that fans will be surprised when we see what is under the Vorlon’s all-covering environment suit.

“I know what they are,” Vulich taunts, “but I can’t tell ya. Just remember that the key to this whole show is that, as the story unfolds, everything will turn out to be other than you thought it to be. When Kosh is revealed, though, I’m not sure that we’ll be involved in creating him.

“Then there’s all the non-aligned species, which mostly appear as background, or in small roles. We were cut loose to do pretty much whatever we wanted, within certain guidelines—that is, nothing too goofy or silly, that might detract from the drama of the show. We made nine or so full, over-the-head versions of different races, and then a number of appliance make-ups...we were tempted to stick a Klingon in there, but decided against it....

“Every once in a while we come under the gun, and have to come up with a one-episode appearance of a single member of a new alien race, in a limited time frame. We did two sets of appliances, building up to a full body, something like the *Alien* suit, for the ‘Infection’ episode. We call it the Nelson suit, after the character who was infected and was transformed into an alien. We tried to give that one a bit of a Nazi look, by shaping its skull like a Nazi helmet...that’s where I think the art in this field is, in making subtle visual associations like that, rather than hitting you over the head with Nazi regalia, as they did in the TV miniseries *V*.

“N’Grath, the bug guy, was initially built for just one or two episodes, but Straczynski liked it well enough to give him a role that had been meant for somebody else—so N’Grath is now the local connection to the criminal underground—a mob boss who can fix you up with whatever contraband you need. Both N’Grath and Kosh are played by one of our people, Russell Johnson, a man who, in one human shell, combines the talents of actor and operator.”

Of course, we concluded our talk with the *B5* curse...what of “the Competition?”

“Well...you know that nobody winds up working on a show like this one because they hate *Star Trek*. But there is a certain amount of competition...which I think could be good for both shows, and good for the fans. They keep us on our toes...and we like to think that we keep them on their toes, too.

“We’re like Avis, here...we’ve gotta try harder.” □

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KNOWS  
WHAT  
EVIL  
LURKS  
IN THE  
HEARTS  
OF MEN?



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# TEKWAR

## On Television

*The veteran sci-fi writer who helped William Shatner bring his vision to a series of best-selling novels reports from the set where the dream takes shape as the newest SF television series.*

BY RON GOULART



Tek creator William Shatner as Walt Bascom, *Cosmos Detective Agency* owner.

JAKE CARDIGAN, THE FUTURE PRIVATE EYE whose first adventure, *TekWar*, made its debut on the hardcover bestseller lists in 1989, has been branching out into other media ever since. The brainchild of William Shatner became the hero of a Marvel comic book, titled *TekWorld*, in 1992 and appeared on a series of trading cards the following year.

In January of this year, the first two-hour *TekWar* telefilms aired, followed by four more feature-length *Tek* adventures. At this writing, *Tek* cast and crew are finishing the last of these before their summer hiatus—and gearing up for the grueling rigors of a weekly production schedule, as continuing negotiations seem likely to bring viewers a one-hour syndicated show on television each and every week of the coming television season.

The world of *Tek* was born back in 1988, when Shatner decided he wanted to do a science fiction novel. I imagine that from the start, he had in mind creating a property that could eventually translate into other media—especially motion pictures. Since Shatner and I have the same literary agents, I was invited to act as a consultant on the project.

*Ace*/Putnam published the first novel in 1989, and it was an impressive success; at this moment, the paperback edition is about to go into its ninth printing. To date, five novels in the very successful series have appeared and a sixth, *TekPower*, is scheduled for publication late this year. Marvel's *TekWorld* comic, which I scripted, had Lee Sullivan as artist. He and I,

with Shatner overseeing, also turned out the trading cards.

The *Tek* world of the novels is 200 years in the future. Jake Cardigan, an ex-cop and an ex-con, is the focal character, and with Latino partner Sid Gomez, he works for the *Cosmos Detective Agency*. Based in Greater Los Angeles, which takes in most of Southern California, *Cosmos* is headed by a cynical, saxophone-playing gentleman named Bascom. In the initial novel Jake is given the assignment of locating a missing scientist and his daughter.

The case involves him with Teklords, drug agents, a bionic Mexican rebel leader named Warbride, and sundry other men, women and machines. *Tek* itself is an electronic brain-stimulating drug and the tekkie's gear includes a headset powered by Tek chips. *Tek* provides users with any sort of virtual reality experience they wish. They can enjoy a wild sex adventure or simply relive a painful childhood experience and make it turn out better this time. *Tek* is addictive and produces numerous negative side effects. In his search for Dr. Kittridge, who's working on an anti-Tek device, and his daughter Beth, Jake teams up with an android replica of Beth. They work together to find the real Beth—as Jake grows increasingly fond of the simulacrum.

Initially, *TekWar* was optioned by Atlantis Films Limited, based in Toronto. Sometime thereafter, Universal Studios also became involved. Then it was announced that Jake Cardigan and his world would be part of a series of movies. In March of 1993, *The Hollywood Reporter* explained: "MCA TV and Universal Television have teamed to launch 'The



Detective Jake Cardigan (Greg Evigan) raids a power generating station where scientist Beth Kittridge is being held prisoner in TekLords. William Shatner's recent TekWar television miniseries set in Toronto 50 years in the future is likely to become a continuing series this fall.



TOP: Cardigan receives a lesson in swordsmanship from Prince Stewart (Michael York) while wearing a virtual reality mask, creating the illusion of a medieval setting in TekLab. ABOVE: Evil beauty, Valkyrie (Sandahl Bergman) helps Teklord Sonny Hokori escape from prison in TekJustice. OPPOSITE ABOVE: Tona, the murdered sister of Teklord Hokori has her disembodied intelligence infused into an android body in TekLords. OPPOSITE BELOW: The android double of Beth Kittridge meets radical environmentalist Warbride (Sheena Easton) when Cardigan follows the Teklords into the Wilderness Zone in TekWar.

tower over a vast courtyard. A futuristic outdoor cafe had been set up at one corner of the square and a juice bar—which, had I but known, was to play an important part in my life that day—was sitting by itself. Extras in moderately futuristic outfits were milling around, and members of the crew, most of them sporting utility belts strung with tools, rolls of tape and other paraphernalia, were also much in evidence. I asked somebody how to find the folks in charge and was told that anybody with a walkie-talkie

Universal Action Network,' a package of 24 first-run telefilms made for syndication." In addition to *TekWar*, five other series were to include John Landis' *Fastlane*, Sam Raimi's *Hercules* and Hal Needham's *Bandit*. At that point, *Daily Variety* said Shatner "would serve only in a producing role." But by the time the first of the *Tek* films went into production in mid-July, Shatner was also serving as director, and he was playing the role of Walt Bascom, head of the detective agency.

Greg Evigan, probably best-known for the television series *BJ and the Bear* and *My Two Dads*, was signed to be Jake Cardigan. Canadian actors took the other major roles, with Eugene Clark as Gomez, Barry Morse as the missing scientist, and Torri Higginson as both Beth Kittridge and her android simulacrum. Sonja Smits was Jake's former wife and Marc Marut his teenage son.

Toward the end of July 1993, at Shatner's invitation, I flew up to Toronto to watch a few days' shooting. Not only did I see the future, but I picked up a nice suntan as well. Having read the script, I was aware that the plot of the novel had been modified and shuffled some. I also knew that the action was unfolding just 50 years in the future and that the venues had been changed from Greater Los Angeles and Mexico to Toronto and environs. Because of budget considerations, it wasn't going to be possible to recreate 22nd-century Mexico on the banks of Lake Ontario.

When I arrived at my hotel on a pleasant Saturday afternoon, I found a large packet from Cardigan Productions awaiting me. It included the latest revision of the script and something I later learned was known as a call sheet, which explained which scenes were being shot and what the location was. Shortly before 8 the next morning I hopped in a cab and traveled a half century forward in time.

This day's location was Metro Square. In real life it's a complex of government buildings, huge structures of glass and silvery metal that



would be able to direct me. As I was wandering around, dodging equipment and avoiding wires and cables, I was hailed by a smiling man in a red baseball cap.

**T**his turned out to be Shatner himself. After we exchanged hugs, he told me, "I'm going to put you in this." He then turned to a young woman with a walkie-talkie and told her to see that I got a costume right away. I suggested to him that, while I didn't mind being an extra, I would like to remain unobtrusive. "You're going to be very obtrusive," he informed me. "You're going to react to an explosion."

Since my acting services weren't required immediately, I was able to stand around and watch the various scenes being prepared and shot. I soon discovered that making a movie requires considerable patience and the ability to stand around, or sit around, for extended stretches of time—in this case, under a hot sun. Being on location is somewhat like being on an ocean cruise and you find yourself getting into long friendly conversations with people you've just met. At various points between takes I found myself chatting with one of the producers, with the fellow in charge of visual effects, and with Shatner's assistant, a young woman who took it upon herself to arrange all my subsequent transportation for me.

Finally, one of the young women with a walkie-talkie informed me that I was almost due to go on. In the foreground Jake and his erstwhile misses are walking across



MCA TV

the courtyard, passing the small piano-shaped juice bar. Seated at the bar are a Madonna impersonator and an Elvis impersonator. When I inquired what they represented, I was told that in this particular future, people had the option of looking like whomsoever they pleased. Nobody explained why these two future citizens opted to resemble celebrities from a half century earlier.

As part of the background action, I was required to walk casually from a point near the cafe over to the bar. During the rehearsal I was brilliant. However, when the actual film-

ing began—my fellow extras and I got under way on the shouted order, “Background action!”—I all at once found I was about to step on the snaking wires for the mike that was following Evigan and Smits. As gracefully as possible, I hopped over wires and avoided tripping. I deftly continued on to the juice bar. Since nobody screamed at me afterwards and there were no retakes, I assume I either went unnoticed or was already out of camera range when I executed my little jig.

Next I spent quite a bit of sundrenched time seated at the bar. I was surprised, though I guess I shouldn’t have been, that none of the other extras had any idea of the plot of the movie. I took it upon myself to explain what was supposed to be going on in the sequences we were appearing in. “See, that’s not actually his son who’s going to explode. It’s an android dupe. And this Beth who explodes, she’s an android, too. The kid’s loaded with explosives and she takes it on herself to save Jake, that’s Evigan, from being killed by a Teldord plot. See?”

Finally it was time to react to the androids blowing up out in the middle of the afternoon courtyard. Of course, the actual explosion wasn’t going to be done then and we were actually called upon to react to nothing. Beth, shoving Jake out of the way, goes running right up to the simulacrum of his son and grabs him. That is going to set off an explosive charge. The juice bar is in the background during all of this and first Beth and then Jake and then his partner go running right by it. Shatner explained that he

*Continued on page 71*



MCA TV



Unforgettable Poster Art from the  
Golden Age of Science Fiction Movies

# PERSISTENT VISION

BY BOB STEPHENS AND VINCENT DI FATE

**T**he 1950s was a time of gathering shadows. The uneasy politics of the Cold War had given birth to the threat of atomic annihilation; automation and the computer, for the first time, threatened human endeavor with dire displacement; World War II rocketry had placed humanity at the threshold of its newest, strangest frontier; and UFO hysteria was the nation's most disturbing new epidemic.

America's fears, and its guarded hopes, were inevitably reflected in the films of the era, and the 1950 release of *Destination Moon* marked the beginning of the first great cycle of science fiction movies, the genre's golden age. The posters of that era promised dreams beyond imagining, a visual roller-coaster ride to far flung worlds and high adventure. They offered handsome, fearless heroes; heroines of breathtaking, otherworldly beauty; realms of dazzling wonder and unspeakable dangers.

While the posters promised magic, the filmmakers gave us middle-aged actors dressed in tights and/or aluminum cookware, whose careers and beauty had seen better days, or whose stars had simply failed to ignite. And the monsters, those fearsome, horrific beasts whose lure had drawn us to the darkened theaters in the first place, often turned out to be lethargic stunt men in latex suits or—worse still—ludicrous marionettes (as in *The Giant Claw*), absurd hand puppets (as in *The Beast with 1,000,000 Eyes*) or, in the spirit of true minimalist cinema, large, partially inflated polyethylene bags (*The Beast from Haunted Cave*).

The perverse pleasure of such shameless

deception is essential to the appreciation of many golden age films. Yet, on many occasions, the films actually matched the miraculously lurid imagery of their poster art, and



WALKS  
!!

Reynold Brown's illustration of the The Creature from the Black Lagoon shows the creature physically altered into a blood-lusting animal for The Creature Walks Among Us (1956). BELOW LEFT: Albert Kallis' painted cabbage-headed aliens for Invasion of the Saucer-Men (1957).

# CREATURE WALKS AMONG US

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UNDERWATER  
THRILLS!

GH SNOWDEN  
RICE MANSON

and Screenplay by ARTHUR ROSS • Produced by WILLIAM ALLAND • A Universal-International Picture

# SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT

SCI-FI CHANNEL

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A visit to the shop of Michael Westmore, the man whose imagination populates the galaxy from Star Trek: The Next Generation to Voyager.

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**T**his anonymously created and wonderfully lurid poster for *Invader From Mars* (1953) is one of the best examples of genre advertising art. **EAR RIGHT:** No one can hold a candle to artist Bob

McGinnis when it comes to portraying sexy women as evidenced in this Italian poster for *Barbarella* (1968). **BELOW:** The first Universal film using the 3-D process, *It Came from Outer Space* (1953), featured aliens who could alter their form to look like us. Joseph A. Smith's eerie illustration captures some of the flavor of this film.



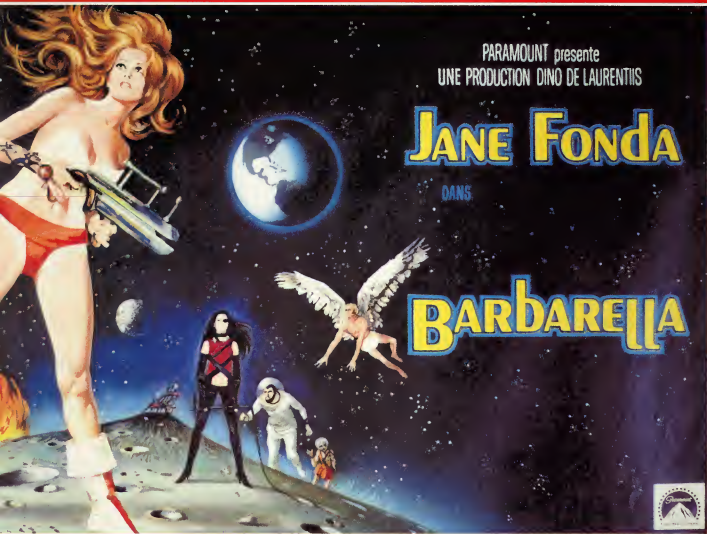
we were transported to a special place by the meeting of two great visual art forms.

In recent years, movie posters have taken on an importance of their own, independent of the memory of their respective films. Collectors pay dearly for original print material, with some of the most coveted titles, such as *King Kong* and *The Bride of Frankenstein* selling for many tens of thousands of dollars at the nation's auction houses.

It has been the general practice for artists to go without credit in the movie ad field, and, in some instances, as many as half a dozen illustrators would work on a single campaign, with several paintings combined into one coherent image by a staff artist whose task was to match styles and conceal the seams. Thanks to an article by Stephen Rebello in the March '88 issue of *Cinefantastique*, a few names have surfaced in connection with some of the best of these works.

Of them, William Reynold Brown was the most prolific, having painted more than 60 genre posters between 1953 and 1970 when he retired. Brown's work ranged from the epics *Ben-Hur* and *Dr. Zhivago* to such quickies as *Attack of the 50-Foot Woman* and *Love Slaves of the Amazon*. His energetic style and





flawless use of bright color, combined with an impressive speed of execution (his paintings were frequently cranked out over a weekend), put him at the top of his field. His genre reputation rests largely on the strength of 10 campaigns executed for Universal-International between 1954 and 1957, including outstanding illustrations for *This Island Earth*, *Tarantula* and *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* trilogy. Brown passed away in 1991 at the age of 73.

There are two common approaches to movie ad art: the graphic logo, in which a dominant element is portrayed in strongly defined visual terms; and the sprawling, epic painting, which attempts to capture the broad sweep and excitement of a film. Brown was at his best with the latter; his signature works often show vast scenes of frenzied panic and mass destruction.

If Brown was consummate master of the epic image, Albert Kallis was an exemplar of the graphic logo approach. Kallis was the son of Maurice Kallis, head of the advertising departments at Paramount and, later, at Universal. Though the design concepts in the posters attributed to Kallis are most likely his own, a broad range of styles and varying lev-

els of competence clearly indicate the involvement of other artists.

Kallis' designs for two 1956 low-budget entries from American International Pictures, *It Conquered the World* and *The She-Creature*, present dramatic, monochromatic drawings of the featured monsters dominating fully modeled, color paintings of the films' heroines.

Another Kallis masterstroke, the ad campaign for the lurid *Invasion of the Saucer-Men*, is among the most sought after collectibles of the period. The painting includes details of mass panic and a city apparently under attack by beam emitting flying saucers—events which never actually appear on the screen.

Like Reynold Brown, Joseph Smith was a proficient draftsman, but generally brought his work to a more resolved level of finish. His illustration for the 14"x36" insert poster for *It Came From Outer Space*, Universal's first film venture to use the 3-D process, is the gem of that movie's ad campaign. Its masterful use of an exotic palette beautifully captures the film's off-center premise of aliens who can assume human form. Smith, still professionally active, began his film career in

the late 1950s after attending the Pennsylvania Museum School of Fine Arts.

There remain countless notable poster images of the era for which we may never be able to credit a source. Any checklist of the best of these would include the art for *Man From Planet X*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Invaders from Mars*, and *Colossus of New York*, just to name a few. In some instances, based on style and treatment, we can make educated guesses. The poster art for the 1968 original release of *Barbarella* is unquestionably the work of Bob McGinnis, who built his reputation on his ability to paint voluptuous, sexy women and did so with great regularity on the campaigns for the many James Bond films.

Too many generations have passed to hope that the majority of movie poster artists can be rescued from anonymity. Perhaps it is best to simply enjoy these images, not as deathless art that will grant immortality to its creators, but as a record of what we thought might be important and what we felt the future might hold for us; a record of dreams and nightmares, of visions still vivid in the mind's eye long after the lights have gone out. ■

A behind-the-scenes conversation with the creator of Star Trek's many aliens.

# IN THE LAB OF THE IMAGINATION WITH MICHAEL WESTMORE

BY LISA MACCARILLO

**N**O ONE HAD ANY IDEA of how long it would last... maybe even just one season," Michael Westmore says of the show he helped create seven years ago. "For me, it was a chance to stay home for a little while and also get to be creative at the same time."

Although the Oscar- and multiple Emmy-winning makeup artist didn't know it at the time, *Star Trek: The Next Generation* would go on not only to enjoy seven years as the most-watched syndicated television program ever, but also to spawn another successful series, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, with yet another series and a feature film in the works.

With alien heads of every ilk lining the walls of his Paramount shop like so many hunting trophies, Westmore sits at the crossroads between the past and the imagination. His job is to supervise the hair and makeup for the entire *Star Trek* franchise, the sort of job that would keep any 55-year-old young at heart. (Which, in Westmore's case, manifests itself in his fondness for *Star Trek* action figures. "One of the most exciting things is to find my designs turned into toys," he says. "The toy company sends me each one and I've got 'em all.")

"For the first two years, I did every bit of the sculpting and mold-making almost by myself," says the makeup veteran, who lives in Studio City, California, with his wife Marion and their three children. "And then it seemed like every time you'd do something they'd want to do a little more and a little more. And then came *Deep Space Nine*, where the approach was even more aggressive. It starts adding up really quickly and gets into not just 30 or 40 or 50 or 200—we're talking about literally thousands of aliens. By now we've probably gone through 10 tons of plaster at least."

Westmore's crew evolved from the original four-man operation to a regular staff of six makeup artists and seven hair stylists, with as many as 40 temporary crew members clocking in for a day's work, depending on the needs of a given episode. The workday always begins with getting all the actors ready for the day's shoot. "Then,



at eight or nine in the morning, the sculptors will sculpt, or if an actor has been signed for next week's episode, then the head molds have to be made.

"There's no such thing as an average day," he says with a hardy laugh. "Maybe an average day would be 13 hours. A kind of semi-average day could be 14 or 15 hours, and a long day could be around 18 hours."

The process by which Westmore creates alien creatures always begins with the script for that week's episode. "I'll read the script," he says, "see what the characters are like, what type of personalities they're supposed to have, and then I'll design something. Every once in a while, the writer will have some concept that the thing should be a little scaly, but 99 times out of 100 it'll say 'Alien.' That's it. The other choice is 'Humanoid,' which means they want something simple, like a forehead, a nose, ears, something like that. But 'Alien' means go for it, be creative."

The last stop before the head molds are made is with the shows' executive producers, Rick Berman, Michael Piller, and Jeri Taylor for *The Next Generation*, or Berman, Piller and supervising producer



To Michael Westmore, the word 'alien' means "go for it, be creative."

David Livingston for *Deep Space Nine*, whose trust in the makeup man give their relationship a near-telepathic quality. "We know there's no such thing as trying to design the perfect alien for the moment," Westmore says. "You could go crazy doing that. I usually come up with one idea, and if it's acceptable maybe we could develop it further; or possibly my idea is too far out and we'll want to cut it back a little bit, but I've never been told to come up with something different."

**C**reativity has always been central to Westmore's life. Ironically, though Westmore hails from a family of makeup artists (his grandfather George started the first film studio makeup department in 1917; his father and five uncles also pioneered the craft), his original ambitions centered around a different kind of art. "I was an art history major at UC Santa Barbara," he says. "And archaeology was also a love of

mine. I worked with the department and went out on digs. In fact, when I graduated from UCSB, I was planning on going to Egypt to dig. I had painted and sculpted also; my particular interest was an object for itself, for its artistic form."

Westmore would most likely have gone on to teach art and art history, but as fate would have it, an opportunity to apprentice for makeup legend and Oscar-winner John Chambers (*Planet of the Apes*) at the Universal makeup shop arose and Westmore won it. "The very first picture I worked on was *Flower Drum Song*, where I painted Chinese masks for the big dance sequence. Next was *The List of Adrian Messenger*, which was at that point the largest appliance movie ever done until *Planet of the Apes* came along. It was a movie in which Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis, Bob Mitchum, Frank Sinatra, about a half a dozen big stars, were disguised through the whole movie. You didn't know who any of them were. John Huston directed. It was the early '60s and a great opportunity for me.

On his own Westmore went on to create the makeup effects for such movies as *Raging Bull*, the original *Rocky* and three of its sequels, TV's *Cheers* and *The Day After*. He won the Oscar in 1985 for



Danny Field

Westmore magic from *Deep Space Nine* (above). Rock musician Mick Fleetwood (right) transformed into an Antidean for the "Manhunt" episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.



adversary, the bad guy for everybody to beat. I think one of the great aspects of the feature is going to be the performances of the actors. Brent [Spiner, who plays Data in the series] is marvelous. They're really putting their all into it."

He adds: "The aliens we are using are familiar ones that you've seen over the years on *The Next Generation*. There are different ones that have come and gone over the years; there's only one scene in a bar in which we get a chance to put a group of aliens in, and we've tried to use familiar faces."

When the feature wraps and the respective crews have had a brief respite, Westmore will begin the task of dreaming up the intergalactic cast of *Star Trek: Voyager*, the series currently in the works. "We had so much work to do to finish up the season that nobody wanted to even think about it yet," he says with a sigh. "It doesn't start filming until August, so I have June, July and August to get down and start redesigning again."

Westmore describes the series as revolving around two ships, a Starfleet vessel called *Voyager*, and a rebel ship, the *McKee*, that once launched into deep space must join forces to find their way back to the Federation. What new characters should fans expect to see? "They're talking about a half-Klingon, half-human woman and several new creatures which I have to design to be regulars on the ship—an American Indian, a Vulcan."

Though the television voyages of the *Enterprise* have come to an end (except, of course, in syndication, where they will run forever), Michael Westmore invites the audience to accompany him into the imagined future presented in *Deep Space Nine* and soon in *Voyager*. "A lot of big movies have come out in the last couple of years which I had scripts for, movies which have won Oscars," he says, "and if I had wanted to leave *Star Trek* I could have gone and done them. But I have my Oscar. I'm thrilled to have gotten it, but I'll stay here and keep cranking out aliens, because it allows me the creativity that I know I'll never get anywhere else." □

his work in transforming actor Eric Stoltz into a teenager with Elephant Man's Disease in *Mask*. Westmore has also garnered seven Emmy Awards, three of them for his work on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Take a long look at Westmore's creatures and one element becomes apparent: all of them possess a reference point to earth. "If there's something in there that you can associate with," he explains, "whether it be the back half of a grasshopper or little beads around a salamander's eyes, we always have that little bit of an earthly element that goes into the aliens for the audience to relate to."

The archaeologist/artist in Westmore is responsible for designing the Klingon, which he describes as a blend of classical and prehistoric shapes. "I have a book of dinosaur vertebrae," he explains, "and every time I design a new Klingon head, I'll use a section of vertebrae on a dinosaur bone to do the forehead. Then I try to give them an aristocratic, 'Three Musketeers' look in the beard. The effect I'm going for is like in the film *Raging Bull*, where classical music is playing in the background during a vicious fight."

Although *Star Trek: The Next Generation* has ceased production, Westmore and his crew have been busy working on the feature film, *Star Trek: Generations*, to be released later this year, which Westmore describes as the grand finale to the series. Fans should expect to see regulars from the original *Star Trek*, including William Shatner, James Doohan and Walter Koenig, as well as the cast of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Westmore describes it as "the meeting of the captains, a way of passing the baton, with Malcolm McDowell in there as the



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Roger Corman continues as a role model and patron  
to Hollywood's 'new breed' of Genre filmmakers.

# It Came from Hollywood

BY DON E. PETERSON

It was no single, narrow accomplishment that made a filmmaking legend of Roger Corman.

The director of 50 movies, many of these genre classics or low-budget landmarks; the producer of over 250 films (and still far from his final count), Corman also launched the careers of a large share of the current roster of Hollywood big-name talent, including Coppola, Scorsese, Dante, Demme, Nicholson, and Cameron, just to name a few. And, while Corman modestly disclaims credit for their success, it can hardly be coincidence that most of the folk labeled by Hollywood as "maverick" or "genius" are Corman-spawned.

Getting his start in the '50s, writing, producing and/or directing everything from *A Bucket of Blood* to *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*, Corman has made a career out of working wonders with nonexistent budgets. Give him two piranhas, 300 pounds of head cheese and a Ouiji board and he could probably make a movie that would turn a sizable profit.

While the '70s saw his directing career phase out as he became head of low-budget haven New World Pictures, Corman sold the company in 1983 only to regroup days later with Concorde-New Horizons, which he still presides over today.

In honor of his contributions to low-budget cinema, the Sci-Fi Channel presented a gem-laden theme week featuring five of his most revered (and notorious) '50s classics;

those who missed it had better catch up with the 17-hour Corman marathon to air on July 4th, with Corman himself appearing as on-screen host.

Soft-spoken and with an unrivaled memory bank of movie trivia, Corman, who turned 68 just days before our interview, took a short break at his Brentwood, California offices (where he is currently in between supervising an editing session and preparing for Cannes) to discuss his illustrious career.

**Sci Fi Entertainment:** You've been in this business for many years, you have a massive body of directorial work, you started the careers of many of today's biggest talents, and you're still plugging away, producing lots of films. Is this what you envisioned earlier in your career?

**Roger Corman:** I did not anticipate that I would be run-





*New Horizons' recent Carnosaurus made to tread in Jurassic Park's giant tracks is a typical example of Corman's current approach to the genre.*

ning my own company. I started as a writer, then a producer and finally a director and I thought I would probably remain a producer-director for the rest of my working life. I became tired of directing in the early 1970s and decided to take a year off, started my company and for whatever reason, I just stayed with the company, so now I'm a producer-distributor.

**SFE:** How did you decide to leave directing—did doing all those films early in your career take its toll?

**CORMAN:** That was it exactly. I had directed over 50 films in 12 or 13 years or something like that. And I was shooting a picture in Ireland and every morning it was very difficult for me to get out of bed and go to the set, but I dutifully did it. I knew that I would barely make it through that film, so I decided I was going to take one year

off and rest, and then I would come back to directing. Then almost as a lark or a small investment, I started New World Pictures, and it grew so rapidly that I could never really find the right person to take it over so I just stayed with it.

**SFE:** Do you find yourself sleeping a lot more?

**CORMAN:** Producing and distributing, although they both can be nerve-racking, are less stress-inducing for me than directing. Directing has always been a lot of fun for me but it's also always been very, very hard work.

**SFE:** You have stayed somewhat faithful to the genre over the years. Why do you still have an affection for fantasy, science fiction and horror when others would have drifted away from it long ago?

**CORMAN:** I like science fiction, fantasy and horror because I think it's the most imaginative genre. Within



**ABOVE:** The Saga of the Viking Women and Their Voyage to the Waters of the Great Sea Serpent—maximum title, minimal budget.  
**ABOVE RIGHT:** Forget The Flintstones—Robert Vaughn brought teen angst to the Stone Age in *Teenage Caveman* (a.k.a. *Prehistoric World*).

your budgetary limitations you can do any kind of thing you want on a film and as the special effects get better, you can do even more.

**SFE:** When you were growing up, did you want to do genre work or did you just simply want to make films?

**CORMAN:** I actually have a degree in engineering. It was in my senior year at Stanford that I decided that I wanted to work in films, but it was easier to take the degree in engineering and just get out and go to work, than to start over in a different major. So I graduated and got a job at 20th Century Fox as a messenger and worked my way up from there. I didn't specifically decide that I wanted to do science fiction or similar type films. As a matter of fact, the first film I wrote was an action chase film called *Highway Dragnet*, but the first film I produced on my own was a picture called *Monster From the Ocean Floor* and that was a science fiction film.

So I always worked in multiple genres but have always

come back to science fiction.

**SFE:** What films inspired you as a child and had the biggest impact?

**CORMAN:** I don't remember any particular films, I liked all types of films. It's not unusual that the directors I liked were Hitchcock, Hawks and Ford. The first film I was aware of in a science fiction way was an English film that impressed me greatly, H.G. Wells' *Things To Come*, which was a really wonderful film I saw as a boy. I haven't seen it since. I don't know what it would be like today, but I just remember it having wonderful effects and wonderful set decorations.

**SFE:** You have been a mentor for a lot of today's major filmmakers and actors. Who was a mentor for you?

**CORMAN:** I didn't really have a mentor and that was probably because I had not gone to film school. There were very few at the time, so to a large extent, I was self-taught. I knew very little about the making of films when I started to make them. When I sold *Highway Dragnet*, I went along with no salary as an associate producer, partially just to get the credit so I would be able to say I was not just a writer, I was a writer and producer, which would aid me





I always worked  
in multiple  
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always come back  
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in getting financing, and that was true. Also, I wanted to see how they would make this film so I could learn from it.

**SFE:** And what did you learn?

**CORMAN:** The first thing was, I had been thinking primarily from the standpoint of producer, but on set the director and the cameraman called most of the shots. The producer had some things to say, but I realized the producer's work was primarily in preproduction and post-production, but during shooting, the director was running the show. So by watching the production process on my first two films, I started directing on my own by the third.

**SFE:** How did you feel when you got the chance to go out and direct for the first time?

**CORMAN:** The major feeling I remember was I was nervous and I was scared. I really didn't know whether I could do it or not and I never ate lunch. I shot the picture, a Western called *Five Guns West*, in nine days on location, and at lunch time I would just study my script for the whole time to try to get myself together to do the afternoon's work.

**SFE:** When do you feel you came into your own and finally overcame this nervousness?

**CORMAN:** It took two or three films before I began to

believe that I really had learned enough to have some degree of confidence, but working with actors took a longer period of time.

**SFE:** How about a few words on a couple of the films represented on this Sci-Fi Channel retrospective? *The Day the World Ended*.

**CORMAN:** As with many—if not most—of the science fiction pictures I did in the 1950s, *The Day the World Ended* was a good idea, hampered by the fact that we didn't really have enough money to do the special effects as well as they might have been done. Nevertheless, I'm pleased with the picture.

**SFE:** *Teenage Caveman*.

**CORMAN:** *Teenage Caveman* was never made—I never made a picture called *Teenage Caveman*, I made a picture called *Prehistoric World*. AIP changed the title to *Teenage Caveman* because they had success with a picture called *I Was A Teenage Werewolf*, and I can still remember the review in the *L.A. Times* when the picture opened. The first line was, "Despite its ten-cent title, *Teenage Caveman* is a surprisingly good picture." Eventually they changed the title back to *Prehistoric World*, but in the popular mind the title has stuck. Again, allowing for the absence of enough money for special effects, it was one of my favorites from that period.

**SFE:** *Viking Women and the Sea Serpent*.

**CORMAN:** The full title is *The Saga of the Viking Women and Their Voyage to the Waters of the Great Sea Serpent*. We couldn't figure out a way to put the title in two or three words, so I said let's go to the other extreme and give them the longest title they've ever seen and then use the greatest cliché in historical pictures at the time which is to open up on an engraved leather book, a hand comes in, opens the cover of the book, and there's the title of the picture.

**SFE:** How do you make a film on a low budget and also a film that's good?

**CORMAN:** It is very, very difficult. It requires great concentration, great intensity from the beginning and specifically, I'm a great believer in production planning. I believe most of the important decisions if not all of them should be made before the camera starts rolling, and once you're

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**T**he studios were doing the type of films I had made, but they were doing them so much bigger and, I must admit, better, that it became very difficult for me to compete...

shooting, you're simply carrying out your pre-arranged plan, you're not trying to come up with a plan.

SFE: Let's talk about New World. When you started the company it wasn't just a place for low-budget exploitation, it was also a distributor for foreign art films. Were foreign films that profitable?

CORMAN: We were primarily known as a producer and distributor of low-budget genre films, and I always liked the films of Bergman, Fellini and Truffaut—all the great "art" directors. When one of their films became available (Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*), I outbid the competing companies and released the picture. I did it because I felt these films were not getting as broad an audience as they deserved and I wanted to help them.

SFE: The major independent studios have adopted that New World aesthetic and have been wildly successful with foreign products such

as *The Piano* and *Like Water for Chocolate*. Why do you think audiences are suddenly more responsive nowadays to foreign films as opposed to 10 years ago?

CORMAN: I think one of the reasons that foreign films are doing better now than they have in the past is that Hollywood has stepped away to a certain extent from quality filmmaking and has put too much emphasis on big-bud-

get action and exploitation films. Hollywood is doing today in big budgets very much what my contemporaries and I were doing in the '50s and '60s with low budgets and it's left a gap in the marketplace. The foreign films are filling that gap.

SFE: If the studios are primarily doing what you were doing, how does that affect you now? Can you compete?

CORMAN: It hinders me and my independent compatriots. *Jaws* might be considered the landmark film that moved in this direction. When it came out, Vincent Canby writing for the *New York Times* wrote, "what is *Jaws* but a big Roger Corman film," and indeed, *Jaws* did have a surprisingly similar plot to *Monster From the Ocean Floor*, which was the first film I produced. And a little bit later, *Star Wars* came out and *Star Wars* had a rather similar plot to several science fiction pictures I had made, like *Battle Beyond the Sun* (a 1963 quickie directed by Francis Ford Coppola under the pseudonym Thomas Colchart). So the studios were doing the type of films I had made, but they were doing them so much bigger and, I must admit, better, that it became very difficult for me to compete. And it is now extremely difficult for the independents to compete with these giant films—so much so that we found our primary market is no longer the motion-picture theater but home video, the pay-TV channels and television.

SFE: Is video as lucrative for you as the theatrical market used to be?

CORMAN: It's very difficult to get a breakaway hit in video. In the '70s we could take a low-budget film, particularly some of the car chase films we did with Ron Howard (*Eat My Dust* and *Grand Theft Auto*) or a science fiction action film with David Carradine and my new young discovery Sylvester Stallone (*Death Race 2000*), and

we could go into regional distribution and out-gross most of the major pictures and make a great deal of money. You can't do that as successfully in either motion-picture theaters or in video rentals today.

**SFE:** Do you think there is something wrong with Hollywood today, especially with the expensive budgets that continue to get more and more out of hand?

**CORMAN:** From a commercial standpoint, Hollywood isn't doing badly. And I think if you can fault Hollywood in any way, it's having too much of an eye for the bottom line. Maybe stepping a little away and saying, "let's gamble once or twice on what we hope can be a really good film that we might make at a reasonable price," but instead it's putting more and more money into these giant films. If you do a *Terminator 2* with Arnold Schwarzenegger that's fine. But if you give them a *Last Action Hero* with Arnold Schwarzenegger, heads are going to roll at that studio.

**SFE:** Why did you sell New World in 1983?

**CORMAN:** I had no intention or reason to sell New World. We were doing quite well. A group of investors came to me and offered me more money than I thought the company was worth, so I sold them my company and started a new company the next day.

**SFE:** Was that hard?

**CORMAN:** It was comparably simple: I took most of my staff with me, we moved to new offices, and we were really set up and running the next day.

**SFE:** What are the differences between Concorde-New Horizons and New World?

**CORMAN:** To a certain extent it's the same company, and some of the people with us even now were with us when it was New World. There are several differences, probably the biggest was that New World depended primarily on theatrical exhibition for the revenue from its films.

**SFE:** How do you spot a Martin Scorsese or a Joe Dante as opposed to someone who couldn't direct themselves out of a bag?

**CORMAN:** It's a variety of things. Before someone really works for me as a producer or director, they worked as my assistant or they worked as a second unit director or an editor so I have a chance to look at their work. I judge on a number of things. First, the person must be intelligent. I have not met a successful producer or director in my life who isn't intelligent. Second, they must be willing to work very hard. This is a hard business to be in and I see whether or not the person can do that. The third and the most tangible is the talent—the creative ability.

**SFE:** Has there been anyone you made a wrong call on—that you let get away?

**CORMAN:** Jim Cameron got away too quickly. He had done special-effects work and second-unit directing for me, and he directed his first film for me in Italy (*Piranha 2: The Spawning*) and he came back and showed it to me, and I thought, "this film isn't really very good." And Jim got another job before I could figure out whether I was going to offer him something else, and then I found out he only directed part of the picture. The Italian producer fired him and took over and directed the rest of it himself, and the Italian producer was a bad director. That was just an unfortunate bit of circumstance because at the time, I thought Jim was the most talented young guy we had.

**SFE:** Who do you feel makes up your current graduate class of Corman—the directors to watch?

**CORMAN:** I think Rodman Flender (*In the Heat of Passion*, *The Unborn*) is going to do well and so will Louis Morneau (*Carnosaur 2*). There's also Katt Shea Ruben (*Streets, Stripped to Kill*), Oley Sassone (*Fantastic Four*) and Jonathan Winfrey (*Assassination Game*, *New Crime City*). Luis Llosa (*Crime Zone*) is about to do well. He's a Peruvian director



who has just started his first big film with Sylvester Stallone and Sharon Stone called *The Specialist*. I think right now we're working with more good directors than we have at any other time.

**SFE:** Do you still want to direct or is that part of your life over?

**CORMAN:** That's probably over—I might go back. Every now and then I kind of get a feeling I might want to direct again, but it's a full-time job doing what I'm doing.

**SFE:** It's surprising you haven't been the head of a major studio yet. Have you ever been offered a position like that?

**CORMAN:** I was approached by one studio and they told me the terms and I said, "I don't think you understand what New World is really doing. I make more money than the person who is the head of your studio, and if I took over, I would be going into a job where it's well known most people are fired after a year or two; so I would have no particular guarantee of longevity and I would be taking a cut in salary."

**SFE:** You're looked up to by many people, how does it feel to be the 'granddaddy' of low-budget filmmaking?

**CORMAN:** I'm pleased that some people have said good things about me and a number of graduates have gone on to do well, but they would have gone on to do well whether they met me or not. Frankly, it would be nice to say I taught them and I probably did teach them a little bit. These were highly talented men and women and if they hadn't met me, they would have had success anyway. It would have possibly just taken them a little longer.

**SFE:** How have you survived doing this for so long—what makes you this war hero while other companies like Cannon, Avco Embassy, the post-Corman New World, Empire, and Orion have all gone under?

**CORMAN:** It may sound a little egotistical, so I will say "we" rather than "I," but I think one of the reasons for our success is we have an extremely strong staff, continually bringing the best graduates of the top universities' film schools. They stay with us for a few years (and you know the names) and they go on to do big pictures. So I think our staff is smarter than the staffs at the other companies—plus we work harder. □

*Don E. Peterson is an educator in San Francisco. He has loved genre films since he first saw The Haunting and The Red House as a child.*



## Long-sought sci-fi classics emerge from the Universal vault.

BY BOB STEPHENS

UNIVERSAL, THE CINEMATIC HOUSE OF HORRORS during the early sound era, specialized in monster movies from 1931 to the beginning of the 1960s. At first, the studio's terrifying beings were supernatural, but by the '90s, most of these lurid figures no longer came from the land of the dead—they arrived, instead, from distant planets. There is, however, an exceptional but unifying thread that runs through all three

decades, drawing horror and science fiction together: The tale of a damaged creature who is the result of an irresponsible, or failed, experiment. In any case, Universal foresaw the nightmarish possibilities of a high-tech future and moved beyond their superstitious past.

and only count anamorphic images, it should be considered the first widescreen movie of the early sci-fi cycle.

The videotape, as pleasing as it is, reproduces none of the aforementioned theatrical specifications for home viewing. We should, in fact, be grateful to MCA that it isn't in 3-D—the movie is too serious, too important to be burdened with such a distracting technical gimmick.

It was directed by Jack Arnold and based on an extraordinarily poetic screen treatment by Ray Bradbury. Together they introduced the desert as an appropriate location for science fiction dramas. The eerie potential of Earth's own "otherworldly" landscape, the vast wastelands of the American Southwest, led to its use as a site in other films and to the evolution of a subgenre known as "desert sci-fi."

In addition, *'It'* was thematically important as the initial body-duplicating movie of the '50s. The Bradbury story concerns a group of shape-shifting aliens who crash-land near an isolated Arizona town. The extraterrestrials, called Xenomorphs, are menacing to earthmen because of their disturbing biological differences, not because of their intentions. They simply want to gather electrical materials, repair their craft, and leave.

Quite interestingly, the central conflict of the drama is not between man and alien. It's between a young astronomer (Richard Carlson) who wishes to protect the intruders, and the sheriff (Charles Drake), who prefers to use force against them. Filmmaker Steven Spielberg has acknowledged *'It'* as a major influence on his masterful *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, which was made over 20 years later.

As enjoyable as *'It'* is, the movie has always been hampered by minor visual problems. The stock footage of a real desert lacks the sharpness to fully integrate with the rest of the film, the contrast is too high in several scenes, and the timing of the day-for-night sequences has always been a bit confusing. Furthermore, there's evidence of chemical aberration in the master print at 3:40-3:47 minutes into the movie.

But these defects are hardly disqualifying. The prerecorded tape looks better than anything else you're likely to see, except for MCA's laser disc of the same title.

*Monster on the Campus* is one of Jack Arnold's most disappointing films. A scientist (Arthur Pranz) accidentally cuts his hand on the teeth of an anachronistic fish, a coelacanth, and contaminates the wound by accidentally



After a mysterious spaceship crashes in the desert, local citizens begin disappearing and the hardware store begins selling lots of electrical equipment in *It Came from Outer Space*.

MCA-Universal Home Video, owner of the film industry's largest assortment of horror and science fiction movies, has embarked on an ambitious archival release program that will reacquire viewers with the studio's dark heritage. The latest available batch includes six unusual mid-century films: *It Came from Outer Space* (1953), *The Monolith Monsters* (1957), *Monster on the Campus* (1958), *The Leech Woman* (1960), *Cult of the Cobra* (1955), and *The Land Unknown* (1957). They are all in black and white and cost \$14.98 apiece.

*It Came from Outer Space* was in the technological and artistic vanguard of '50s science fiction movies. *'It'* was the first of its category to be filmed in the 3-D process and to have a stereophonic soundtrack. The film was also projected at an aspect ratio of 1.85:1, as opposed to the Academy standard of 1.33:1. Unless you're a purist

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dunking it in water from the specimen's storage ice. An infection transforms the researcher into a homicidal, prehistoric man.

Unfortunately, *Monster* is just a cheap version of the much overdone Jekyll/Hyde idea. Movies like this tend to occur late in a successful genre director's career. By then, he knows how to make a certain kind of film and goes on automatic pilot. The end result is frequently an empty caricature of his early, good work. Still, Arnold was a skillful craftsman, and the movie contains a single image that foreshadows the alarming, graphic violence of '60s horror movies: We see the corpse of a young woman strung casually from a tree limb, staring blankly, turning ever so slightly among the leaves.

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The Leech Woman's secret to eternal youth requires a steady supply of male sacrifices.

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1935, Universal regularly worked genre variations on its male figures of horror. Female subjects included *Dracula's Daughter*, *The Invisible Woman*, *The Spider Woman Strikes Back*, and *Captive Wild Woman*, among others. With these successful precedents, it's easy to see why the studio later produced such films as *The Leech Woman* and *Cult of the Cobra*.

*The Leech Woman*, directed by Edward Dein, has been cited as an early example of feminist film by a few academic critics, and it does deal with related subject matter: spousal abuse and exploitation, an aging woman's quest for her lost youth under crippling social pressures, and a display of matriarchal power within an African tribe.

The middle-aged wife (Colleen Gray) of a younger scientist (Phillip Terry) is taken by her husband in search of an orchid pollen called nipe. When nipe is combined with fluid from the pineal gland of a murdered man, then taken as a drink, an old woman can become young again. The leech woman, after killing her husband and a safari guide, returns to America in search of romantic fulfillment and more sacrificial victims.

The screenplay, by science fiction novelist David Duncan (*Dark Dominion*), sets up the dramatic problems very well. But the development of the plot, through an unsuccessful concoction of latent feminism, a jungle adventure and transformative horror, is ultimately absurd. Fantastic cinema, however, can be an inadvertently imaginative medium,

*Continued on page 72*



# JULY • AUGUST PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

## DAYTIME

TIME	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Cartoon Quest	Informational	Informational
6:30			
7:00		Cartoon Quest	
7:30			
8:00			Science Show
8:30			Inside Space
9:00	Lost in Space		Mysteries
9:30			Sci-Fi Buzz
10:00	The Incredible Hulk		Ripley's Believe It or Not
10:30			
11:00	Dark Shadows	Swamp Thing	Misfits of Science
11:30	Dark Shadows / Friday: <i>Galactic Trader</i>	Swamp Thing	
Noon	Beauty and the Beast	The Powers of Matthew Star	The Voyagers
12:30			
1:00	The Bionic Woman	Space 1999	Time Tunnel
1:30			
2:00	The Hitchhiker	Moonlight Matinee	UFO
2:30	Beyond Reality		
3:00	Land of the Giants		Moonlight Matinee
3:30			
4:00	Lost in Space	Radiation Theater	
4:30			
5:00	The Incredible Hulk		Radiation Theater
5:30			
6:00	Beauty and the Beast	Starman	
6:30			Galactic Trader

## EVENING

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Alien Nation	Amazing Stories
7:30	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.		Amazing Stories
8:00	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Sci-Fi Feature	The Incredible
8:30	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Film	Hulk
9:00	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*		Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30							Mysteries
10:00	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Friday the 13th	Inside Space
10:30						The Series	Science Show

## LATE NIGHT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Ray Bradbury	Alien Nation	Amazing Stories
11:30	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.	Hitchcock Pre.		Amazing Stories
Midnite	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Battlestar Gal. /	Sci-Fi Feature	The Incredible
12:30	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Buck Rogers	Film	Hulk
1:00	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*	SF Series/Movie*		Sci-Fi Buzz
1:30							Mysteries
2:00	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Quan.Leap/Movie*	Friday the 13th	Inside Space
2:30						The Series	Science Show
3:00	Informational	Informational	Informational	Informational	Suspense Theater	Radiation Theater	Galactic Trader
3:30							

All programming shown Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone.

\*Sci-Fi Movie airs one week per month. Titles in red denote original programming. All programming subject to change.



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# JULY MOVIES

ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

### SATURDAY, 7/2

2:00 pm **The Amazing Colossal Man**  
1957, Science Fiction, Glenn Langdon  
4:00 pm **War of the Colossal Beast**  
1958, Science Fiction, Sally Fraser  
8:00 pm **The Devonsville Terror**  
1983, Horror, Donald Pleasence  
12:00 am **The Devonsville Terror**  
1983, Horror, Donald Pleasence  
3:00 am **The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari**  
1919, Fantasy, Werner Krauss, Conrad Veidt

### SUNDAY, 7/3

3:00 pm **I'm Dangerous Tonight**  
1990, Suspense, Madchen Amick  
5:00 pm **A Distant Scream**

### MONDAY, 7/4

9:00 am **Werewolf of London**  
1935, Horror, Henry Hull, Warner Oland  
10:30 am **The Wolf Man**  
1941, Horror, Lon Chaney Jr.  
12:00 pm **Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man**  
1943, Horror, Lon Chaney Jr., Lionel Atwill  
1:30 pm **I Was a Teenage Werewolf**  
1957, Horror, Michael Landon  
3:00 pm **Curse of the Werewolf**  
1961, Horror, Oliver Reed  
5:00 pm **The Howling**  
1981, Horror, Dee Wallace  
7:00 pm **The Wolf Man**  
1941, Horror, Classic, Lon Chaney Jr., Evelyn Ankers  
8:30 pm **Curse of the Werewolf**  
1961, Horror, Oliver Reed  
10:30 pm **The Howling**  
1981, Horror, Dee Wallace  
12:30 am **Werewolf of London**  
1935, Horror, Henry Hull, Warner Oland

### SATURDAY, 7/9

1:00 pm **Leonard Nimoy: Trek Memories**  
Documentary  
2:00 pm **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Special**  
Documentary, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
3:30 pm **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**  
1979, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

### SUNDAY, 7/10

7:30 pm **Star Trek 5: The Final Frontier**  
1989, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
10:00 pm **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**  
1979, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
1:30 am **Star Trek 5: The Final Frontier**  
1989, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
3:00 pm **Curse of the Werewolf**  
1961, Horror, Oliver Reed  
5:00 pm **The Howling**  
1981, Horror, Dee Wallace  
7:00 pm **The Wolf Man**  
1941, Horror, Classic, Lon Chaney Jr., Evelyn Ankers  
8:30 pm **Curse of the Werewolf**  
1961, Horror, Oliver Reed  
10:30 pm **The Howling**  
1981, Horror, Dee Wallace  
12:30 am **Werewolf of London**  
1935, Horror, Henry Hull, Warner Oland

### SATURDAY, 7/16

2:00 pm **The Incredibly Strange Creatures...**  
1963, Horror, Cash Flagg  
4:00 pm **The Giant Spider Invasion**  
1975, Science Fiction, Steve Brodie  
8:00 pm **The Rejuvenator**  
1988, Science Fiction, Marcus Powell  
12:00 am **The Rejuvenator**  
1988, Science Fiction, Marcus Powell  
2:00 am **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Special**  
Documentary, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
3:30 pm **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**  
1979, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

### SUNDAY, 7/17

9:00 am **Retik, The Moon Menace**  
1951, Science Fiction, George Wallace



Oliver Reed stars as a man who struggles to control the monster within in *Curse of the Werewolf*, airing Monday, July 4.

7:30 pm **Star Trek 5: The Final Frontier**  
1989, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
10:00 pm **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**  
1979, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
1:30 am **Star Trek 5: The Final Frontier**  
1989, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

### SUNDAY, 7/10

10:00 am **Leonard Nimoy: Trek Memories**  
Documentary  
11:00 am **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Special**  
Documentary, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
12:30 pm **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**  
1979, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
4:00 pm **Star Trek 5: The Final Frontier**  
1989, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

### SATURDAY, 7/16

2:00 pm **The Incredibly Strange Creatures...**  
1963, Horror, Cash Flagg  
4:00 pm **The Giant Spider Invasion**  
1975, Science Fiction, Steve Brodie  
8:00 pm **The Rejuvenator**  
1988, Science Fiction, Marcus Powell  
12:00 am **The Rejuvenator**  
1988, Science Fiction, Marcus Powell  
2:00 am **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Special**  
Documentary, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy  
3:30 pm **Star Trek: The Motion Picture**  
1979, Science Fiction, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

### SUNDAY, 7/17

9:00 am **Retik, The Moon Menace**  
1951, Science Fiction, George Wallace

11:00 am **Rocket to the Moon**  
1954, Science Fiction, Victor Jory  
12:30 pm **Missile to the Moon**  
1959, Science Fiction, Richard Travis, Cathy Downs  
2:00 pm **Stowaway to the Moon**  
1975, Science Fiction, Lloyd Bridges  
4:00 pm **Beyond the Rising Moon**  
1990, Science Fiction, Tracy Davis  
6:00 pm **Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Moon Special**  
Documentary, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy

### MONDAY, 7/18

9:00 pm **It Came From Outer Space**  
1953, Science Fiction, Richard Carlson  
1:00 am **It Came From Outer Space**  
1953, Science Fiction, Richard Carlson

### TUESDAY, 7/19

9:00 pm **They Came From Beyond Space**  
1967, Science Fiction, Robert Hutton  
1:00 am **They Came From Beyond Space**  
1967, Science Fiction, Robert Hutton

### WEDNESDAY, 7/20

9:00 pm **Planets Against Us**  
1961, Science Fiction, Michel Lemoine  
1:00 am **Planets Against Us**  
1961, Science Fiction, Michel Lemoine

### THURSDAY, 7/21

9:00 pm **The Day Mars Invaded Earth**  
1962, Science Fiction, Kent Taylor  
1:00 am **The Day Mars Invaded Earth**  
1962, Science Fiction, Kent Taylor

### FRIDAY, 7/22

9:00 pm **The Thing**  
1982, Science Fiction, Kurt Russell  
1:00 am **The Thing**  
1982, Science Fiction, Kurt Russell

### SATURDAY, 7/23

2:00 pm **Dr. Who: The Five Doctors**  
Science Fiction, 20th Anniversary Special  
4:00 pm **The Incredible Shrinking Man**  
1957, Science Fiction, Grant Williams

8:00 pm Trancers II  
1991, Science Fiction, Helen Hunt  
12:00 am Trancers II  
1991, Science Fiction, Helen Hunt  
3:00 am White Zombie  
1932, Horror, Bela Lugosi  
**SUNDAY, 7/24**  
3:00 pm Nightmare on the 13th Floor  
1990, Horror, James Brolin

5:00 pm Alien Lover  
1975, Science Fiction  
**SATURDAY, 7/30**  
2:00 pm Nosferatu  
1922, Horror, Silent, Max Schreck  
4:00 pm Nosferatu, The Vampire  
1979, Horror, Klaus Kinski  
8:00 pm Zeram  
1990, Japanese, Action

12:00 am Zeram  
1990, Japanese, Action  
3:00 am Svengali  
1931, Supernatural, John Barrymore  
**SUNDAY, 7/31**  
3:00 pm The Atomic Submarine  
1959, Science Fiction  
4:30 pm Zeram  
1990, Japanese, Action

## AUGUST MOVIES ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

**SATURDAY, 8/6**  
2:00 pm The Wasp Woman  
1960, Science Fiction, Susan Cabot  
3:30 pm Deathwatch  
1982, Science Fiction, Romy Schneider, Harvey Keitel  
8:00 pm Lifeforce  
1985, Horror, Steve Railsback  
12:00 am Lifeforce  
1985, Horror, Steve Railsback  
3:00 am The Hunchback of Notre Dame  
1923, Horror, Classic, Lon Chaney

**SUNDAY, 8/7**  
3:00 pm Dr. Cyclops  
1940, Horror, Albert Decker  
5:00 pm Lifeforce  
1985, Horror, Steve Railsback

**SATURDAY, 8/13**  
2:00 pm Flash Gordon: Space Soldiers  
1936, Buster Crabbe  
8:00 pm Homewrecker  
1992, Suspense, Robby Benson  
12:00 am Homewrecker  
1992, Suspense, Robby Benson  
3:00 am Fantastic Planet  
1973, Animated, Science Fiction

**SUNDAY, 8/14**  
3:00 pm The Giant Spider Invasion  
1975, Science Fiction, Barbara Hale  
5:00 pm Homewrecker  
1992, Suspense, Robby Benson

**SATURDAY, 8/20**  
2:00 pm The Lost World  
1960, Science Fiction, Michael Rennie, Jill St. John  
4:00 pm Homewrecker  
1992, Suspense, Robby Benson  
2:00 am The Lost World  
1925, Silent, Bessie Love, Wallace Berry  
4:00 am Homewrecker  
1992, Suspense, Robby Benson

**SUNDAY, 8/21**  
3:00 pm Terror from the Year 5000  
1958, Science Fiction

**MONDAY, 8/22**  
9:00 pm Class of Nuke 'Em High  
1986, Science Fiction, Janelle Brady  
1:00 am Class of Nuke 'Em High  
1986, Science Fiction, Janelle Brady

**TUESDAY, 8/23**  
9:00 pm Class of Nuke 'Em High II: Subhumanoid Meltdown  
1991, Science Fiction, Brick Bronsky  
1:00 am Class of Nuke 'Em High II: Subhumanoid Meltdown  
1991, Science Fiction, Brick Bronsky

**WEDNESDAY, 8/24**  
9:00 pm The Toxic Avenger  
1986, Science Fiction, Andree Maranda

1:00 am The Toxic Avenger  
1986, Science Fiction, Andree Maranda

**THURSDAY, 8/25**  
9:00 pm The Toxic Avenger Part II  
1989, Science Fiction, Ron Fazio  
1:00 am The Toxic Avenger Part II  
1989, Science Fiction, Ron Fazio

**FRIDAY, 8/26**  
9:00 pm The Toxic Avenger 3: The Last Temptation of Toxie  
1989, Science Fiction, Ron Fazio  
1:00 am The Toxic Avenger 3: The Last Temptation of Toxie  
1989, Science Fiction, Ron Fazio

**SATURDAY, 8/27**  
2:00 pm Subspecies  
1991, Horror, Michael Watson  
8:00 pm Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge  
1991, Horror, Guy Rolfe  
12:00 am Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge  
1991, Horror, Guy Rolfe  
3:00 am Things to Come  
1936, Science Fiction, Raymond Massey, Ralph Richardson

**SUNDAY, 8/28**  
3:00 pm The Monster of Piedras Blancas  
1957, Horror  
5:00 pm Puppet Master III: Toulon's Revenge  
1991, Horror, Guy Rolfe

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### Channel News

Continued from page 24

Habitat Mars; Georges Favreau, the suave French prime minister of the European community; General Jorge Diaz, the president of the Hispanic Commonwealth; Mohammed Zaganada, the Kenyan mullah of the Islamic Federation; Yakov Kanter, the prime minister of Israel; Kyle Swann, the enigmatic head of the rebel "R" movement; Perry Epp, VR opponent and FTL commentator; Pamela

Corvino, figurehead of the movement towards clone rights; and Bill Kennedy, the last surviving member of the powerful Kennedy clan, who keeps a Marilyn Monroe clone on the side. They're all part of the ever-expanding universe of *FTL Newsfeed*.

Computer users: for detailed *FTL News* character biographies and storyline synopses, check out the SFC Forum on America Online! *FTL Newsfeed* airs Monday through Friday at 2:58 pm, 7:29 pm and 11:29 pm; Saturday at 3:59 pm, 5:59 pm; Sunday at 11:59 am, 12:59 pm 4:59 pm. □

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BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

ONE OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY'S FAVORITE SALES PITCHES—a line so familiar it's become a joke—is an earnest, urgent message that runs something like this: "If you buy just one diet book this year, make sure it's this one!!!" (For 'diet book,' of course, you can substitute 'gardening book,' 'Civil War book,' or 'Sylvia

Plath biography,' etc.) ■ Though it pains me to resort to a cliché, there's no better way to do

justice to *The Star Trek Encyclopedia* by Michael Okuda, Denise Okuda, and Debbie Mirek (400 pp, \$18 paperback/\$25 hardcover, New York: Pocket Books) than by stepping up to the microphone and declaring, after some suitable throat-clearing, "If you buy only one *Star Trek*

of asides in italics or parentheses that provide background information about the show. So while you won't find any listing under "Shatner, William," you'll find a photo of him (in Federation uniform) under "Kirk, James T.," followed by the actor's name in parentheses. In an entry on "white rhinos," the depressing news that these animals were "hunted to extinction in the 22nd century" is followed by an even more depressing note, in italics, that this particular *Star Trek* prediction may well come true far sooner. Similarly, an entry on "Krieger waves" offers a brief technical description of this "potentially valuable new power source," complete with references to Tanuga IV, Lambda field generators, and the death of the waves' discoverer ("Krieger was killed when his research station exploded in 2366"). You'll also find, in parentheses, the specific TV-show source for this information ("A Matter of Perspective" on *The Next Generation*), as well as, in italics, the *obiter dictum*, "Krieger waves were named for *Star Trek* technical consultant David Krieger"—who, it turns out, wasn't actually killed in 2366.

Speaking of photos, it's worth pointing out that the book is profusely illustrated—profusely and appropriately. You won't find flashy outer-space art or action scenes from the shows, pleasant though those things can be; instead, there are hundreds of small black-and-white character photos (even of the White Rabbit as he appeared in the original series episode "Shore Leave"); many of these photos are available nowhere else, as they seem to have been "captured" from videotapes of the original shows and digitally enhanced by movie-makeup artist-turned book designer Doug Drexler. Drexler also contributed a number of scientific diagrams, just as you'd expect in a good 20th-century reference work.

And it's as a reference work that *The Star Trek Encyclopedia* will undoubtedly be used. The book is sure to be a bet-settler; I'm not so sure it's going to be anyone's favorite bedtime reading, except for true obsessives. Granted, it's amusing to come upon unexpected references to Paris ("Ancient city in France on Earth in which is located the office of the President of the Federation Council"), Sun Tzu ("Ancient Chinese philosopher whose writings on the art of warfare are still taught at Starfleet Academy"), and something called "pipius claw" ("a traditional Klingon dish"). Also, there's a certain fascination in the detailed spaceship diagrams, the



At last—an encyclopedic record of every significant event in the lives of the Enterprise crew!

book now or ever, make sure it's this one."

The encyclopedia is subtitled "A Reference Guide to the Future," and that's literally what it sets out to be: a complete guide to the *Star Trek* saga, written as if the events depicted in the show's 263 on-screen hours (three TV series and six films so far) actually occurred and are now part of history. "We have assumed editorially," the writers explain, "that both authors and readers are residents of the late 24th century, a number of years after the current *Star Trek* adventures." That's an inspired idea, one that puts the reader squarely into that fictional universe and makes perusing the entries a lot more fun, in the manner of those deadpan "biographies"—complete with scholarly apparatus—of figures like Sherlock Holmes and Nero Wolfe.

Wisely, however, the authors haven't let themselves be limited by this game of let's-pretend. There are plenty

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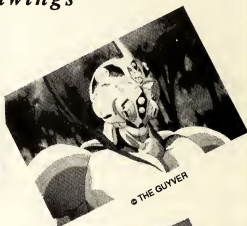
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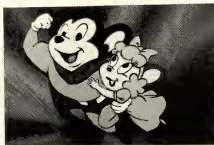
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reproductions of sleek Starfleet insignia, and the front-and-back photos of a genuine 21st-century baseball card (for "Buckaroo" Bokai, heavy-hitting shortstop for the London Kings). But those of us who aren't fanatics will probably not find our pulses quickening at the news that "Maura" is the "beloved pet dog of Aquiel Uhnari" which "was killed at Relay Station 47 in 2369 by the same coalescent organism that killed Keith Rocha," or that a "protodynoplaser" is a "medical instrument in use aboard the Enterprise-D. The device was used on Zalkonian patient John Doe to stabilize his immune system."

As the *New York Times* used to proclaim in its ads, "You don't have to read it all, but it's nice to know it's all there."

**Trek: The Printed Adventures**, by James Van Hise, 153 pp, \$14.95, Las Vegas: Pioneer Books (800) 444-2524.

Two types of material that *The Star Trek Encyclopedia* deliberately (and wisely) ignores as Outside the Canon are the *Star Trek* animated TV series and the dozens of professionally published *Trek* novels and story collections. With *The Printed Adventures*, the indefatigable *Trek* chronicler James Van Hise has attempted to cover this latter area, as well as the world of fan fiction.

With additional adventures constantly appearing—Pocket Books, a Paramount division and therefore not coincidentally the major publisher in this line, is giving the world a new *Star Trek* novel nearly every month—there's no way this guide can be utterly up-to-date. Nor, with rare exceptions, does it even provide such presumably basic information as the publication dates and page lengths of the books it lists: an unforgivable oversight. Nonetheless, Van Hise cites more than 160 paperback titles (over 50 of which were also published in hardcover), and most of them are reviewed in this volume, either by Van Hise himself, Wendy Rathbone, or Alex Burleson.

Why doesn't the book review them all? Space, the final frontier, seems to have been the problem. "There wouldn't be room for anything else in this volume if we covered every one in detail," says the author, perhaps somewhat defensively, writing of the more than 100 *Star Trek* novels already published by Pocket Books. "No one anywhere has attempted to review even this many in one place before. Since this volume covers more than 80, very little is left out. Those who would like to be selective in their reading may find this an excellent guide."

And indeed they will; the individual commentaries here, running several hundred words each, are detailed and authoritative, right down to quibbles over the correct designation of starships. Jean Hinson's introduction takes writer Vonda McIntyre to task for "her insistent error (in all her novels) of referring to the *Enterprise* as a Constellation class starship; I wish someone would inform her that *Enterprise* is a Constitution class



The Son of Kong was just one of the many Willis O'Brien stop-motion effects films that followed his classic *King Kong*. Most of them failed to live up to the success of the earlier classic.

ship." Later, Alex Burleson raps Diane Carey's knuckles for a similar gaffe; in the Pocket novel *Best Destiny*, she apparently refers to "Enterprise-class design" as "Constitution class." Hey, now I'm confused!

Nearly half the book is devoted to reviews of fan publications, including fanzines with titles like *Starborne*, *Antares Rising*, and *Dreadnought Explorations*—a useful reminder that this affectionate, somewhat disorganized reference work, with its garish cover and amateurish design so typical of Pioneer Books, is aimed primarily at fans.

**Willis O'Brien, Special Effects Genius**, by Steve Archer, 239 pp, \$28.50, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co. (919) 246-4460.

When most people hear the name Willis O'Brien, they think of *King Kong*. As the man who animated the ape for producer/directors Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, he bore, perhaps more than any other individual, responsibility for the film's enormous success. Cooper later called him "a bloody genius" and, more bluntly, "the best trick man in the business."

Known to people in the industry as "Obie," O'Brien also handled effects for the great silent film *The Lost World* and created as well the starring creatures of *The Son of Kong* and *Mighty Joe Young*. The former was such a disappointment that, as O'Brien's widow recounts in this book, he asked to have his name removed from the credits; the latter, however, was actually a greater technical achievement than *Kong*, even if the story wasn't as compelling. (It also marked the feature film debut of another great animator of the old school, Ray Harryhausen, who worked as O'Brien's assistant.)

In some ways, as this book makes clear, it was all downhill for O'Brien after *King Kong*. A painstaking craftsman but a poor self-promoter, he spent most of his career dreaming

up visionary projects such as *War Eagles*, an epic adventure too expensive to produce, and working on low-budget productions such as *The Beast of Hollow Mountain*, *The Black Scorpion*, and that delightful film with the oddly redundant title, *The Giant Behemoth*. He died in 1962, at age 76, during the making of *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*.

Judging from this volume, and from the beautiful preproduction sketches that it reproduces, the *War Eagles* project might have become one of the most stirring fantasies ever filmed. Involving a *Kong*-like expedition to the Arctic, predatory dinosaurs, and a lost race of eagle-borne Vikings, and climaxing with, in Archer's words, "an elaborate aerial battle over New York and the Statue of Liberty... it promised to make *King Kong* look like small meat." Merian Cooper described the story as "a super western of the air in which, instead of riders of the plains on horseback, we will have wild riders of the air on giant prehistoric eagles." He predicted that it would have "greater box-office appeal than *King Kong*, and will make more money." Alas, we'll never know.

Written by a man who is himself a special effects expert, this tribute to O'Brien is strictly business; it's long on plot descriptions but rather skimpy, even mysterious, on the facts of its subject's life. It comes as a shock to read, in passing, that O'Brien's first wife went crazy in 1933 and murdered their two sons before fatally shooting herself. The details of this bizarre tragedy, and its consequences, are never revealed.

The book's strong points are the technical details, the colorful reminiscences of O'Brien by those who worked with him (as well as by his second wife), and the wealth of illustrations—sketches, paintings, snapshots, production stills, and photos of the pint-sized but lovingly detailed models which were the essence of O'Brien's art.

# TEKWAR

Continued from page 47

wanted everybody to react when he said, "explosion."

Again, in rehearsal I was brilliant. But on the first actual take I somehow failed to hear Shatner say anything about an explosion. This caused me to stand there in a perplexed way, somewhat in the manner of the long-forgotten silent comedian Harry Langdon, while everybody else was miming explosion reactions. It also caused Evigan to bump into me and remark, "You're going to have to move faster." Shatner suggested another take. This time he shouted, "Explosion!" and I heard it clearly. I reacted, nearly falling off my stool and ending up hugging Madonna and shaking with fear. By now I'd decided that show business was in my blood.

The initial TekWar movie was broadcast in January of this year, launching Universal's "Action Pack" network. The advance reviews were predominantly favorable. *TV Guide's* critic gave the show an 8 rating (out of a possible 10) and *Variety* said, "There's plenty of imagination, involving characterization and compelling conflicts." Furthermore, "Shatner's direction is solid."

When I watched the show in the privacy of my own home, I concurred. The story moved with admirable force and the special effects were most impressive. I was also gratified to note that my wire-hopping bit was not in the final film. I acted, I think, brilliantly in the explosion scene and was somewhat disappointed that most of my friends who watched, and even one of my sons, weren't able to spot my cameo appearance. They were all concentrating on Evigan and the exploding Torri Higginson.

The debut film did very well. *The Hollywood Reporter*, in a story headlined "'TekWar' Wins Ratings Battle," reported that it landed in a "strong sixth place" among all syndicated TV shows for its premiere week, beating all the other sci-fi shows except *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and that in also came in ahead of such shows as *Married... With Children* and *Hard Copy*. Two more TekWar movies aired in rapid succession, the third co-starring Michael York, veteran of the science fiction movie *Logan's Run*. A fourth TekWar movie has been finished and a fifth is now in the works. The Hollywood trade papers have already reported that 22 episodes of a one-hour series will be produced. Shatner and Universal haven't as yet confirmed this, but the odds are very good that there will indeed be a regular TekWar series on television before the end of this year. □

Veteran SF writer Ron Goulart is now at work on *The Funnies: 100 Years of American Comics*. His own comic strip, "Ron Goulart's Golden Age of Funnies," recently debuted in *The Comic Buyers Guide*.

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## Video

Continued from page 64

and this movie's absurdity does not always  
work against it. Occasionally, the unassuming  
parts of *The Leech Woman* catalyze the  
bizarre narrative mixture, making the film

tact with the expanding crystals renders soil  
infertile and turns animal life to stone.

The quartzlike towers seem a natural out-  
growth of the desert, viral multiplication of  
structures that threatens to overrun a nearby  
town and, eventually, the entire continent.  
(For reasons you will understand upon see-  
ing the movie, their formation would cease at



When a meteor crashes to Earth in *The Monolith Monsters*, geologist Ben Gilbert must discover  
the secret of the mysterious rocks before they blanket the world.

seem vitally unpredictable and perversely  
original.

Cult of the *Cobra* is more stylish in its  
approach than *The Leech Woman*. It's an effective  
blend of mystical horror and film noir  
and is based on an older vision of the female,  
that of an exotic, seductive slayer of men.  
Francis D. Lyon's movie is about a group of  
World War II veterans who interrupt a  
deadly cult's ritual. Cursed by the sect's infu-  
riated priest, the men are finally tracked  
down in New York City by a beautiful  
woman, Faith Domergue, who is a "lamia,"  
or a weresnake.

*Cobra* works very well because its execu-  
tion is simple and unpretentious. The focus  
is on character relationships, not metamor-  
phic special effects, and the friends are well-  
portrayed by Richard Long, Marshall  
Thompson, William Reynolds, Jack Kelly,  
and the young David Janssen.

*Monolith Monsters*, the purest example of  
desert sci-fi, was made by the little-known,  
but gifted John Sherwood. Having served as  
a first assistant director to Max Ophüls, the  
virtuoso of film cadence, Sherwood acquired  
a great sense of pacing. He had the ability to  
move a film along without any reliance on  
spectacular effects.

The narrative revolves around truly  
unique aliens, meteoric crystals that grow to  
a mountainous size. The development of  
these monoliths is linked with exposure to  
moisture and the absorption of silica. Con-

tact with the expanding crystals renders soil  
infertile and turns animal life to stone.)

*Monolith Monsters* is one of the most under-  
rated films of the genre and is compromised  
only by a contrived conclusion.

*The Land Unknown* is about four members  
of a scientific military reconnaissance unit  
who are stranded in a valley near the South  
Pole. The area is trapped in time; it's an unex-  
pected, climatological holdover from the  
Mesozoic Era.

The movie's ancient creatures are puppets,  
a man in a dinosaur suit, and some cruelly  
manipulated lizards. The art direction com-  
pensates for the crude model work, and  
despite the obviousness of the painted back-  
grounds, it conveys a significant sense of pre-  
historic ambience. The story line, though  
familiar, is satisfactory, but the dialogue is  
genuinely awful: "We're not gonna dig our  
way outta here through human flesh...not  
Maggie's, Hunter's, not even yours," says  
Jack Mahoney in a climactic scene.

Mahoney, William Reynolds, Phil Harvey,  
Shawn Smith and Henry Brandon are the  
performers. The wild-eyed, swarthy Bran-  
don is the best of the lot as the most horrify-  
ing monster of all, an alienated human being.

MCA-Universal Home Video plans to  
release more of their horror and science fic-  
tion movies in the near future, but specific  
selections have not been announced. □

Bob Stephens is the San Francisco Examiner's  
video columnist and resident guru on the genre.



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1. Who developed the first warp drive?
2. What *Star Trek* original series crew member is credited with the first *Enterprise* design?
3. Name the year and location of the first launch of the original *Enterprise*.
4. Who preceded Captain James T. Kirk at the helm?
5. What was the highest recorded speed the original ship ever achieved?
6. What is the significance of stardate 2270 in the history of the *Enterprise*?
7. The *Enterprise* was refitted under whose command?
8. What was the *Enterprise's* mission while it was under the command of Captain Spock?
9. How was the first *Enterprise* retired?
10. Who was the first commander of the *Enterprise-A*?
11. Why was Admiral Kirk reluctant to take



12. Who was commander of the *Enterprise-B*?
13. And who commanded the *Enterprise-C*?
14. In the 24th century, warp factor 1 still referred to the speed of light, but higher warp factors were recalculated on a curve that culminated in warp factor 10. What does warp 10 represent under this new system?
15. Name the year and location of the first launch of the *Enterprise-D*.
16. What significant event in the history of the *Enterprise-D* occurred in sector 001, stardate 2367?
17. Why was the standard cruising speed for all Federation ships reduced to warp factor 5?
18. Name the design class of each *Enterprise*.
19. Name three men, other than Jean-Luc Picard, who have commanded the *Enterprise-D*.
20. Name the (real-world) principal designer of the *Enterprise-D*, who also contributed to the design of *Enterprise-A* and *Enterprise-C*.

## ANSWERS:

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Since our debut in May, the cards and letters have started rolling in and—to paraphrase an Oscar-winning actress—you love us! So far, the bouquets outnumber the brickbats by 236 to 1—and that guy just doesn't like sci-fi in the first place. Don't start taking us for granted—we need your letters and your input! Both love notes and hate mail are welcome.

Address all paper correspondence to the Editor, Sci-Fi Entertainment, 457 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 22070; electronic mail should be addressed to [flixfan@dorsai.dorsai.org](mailto:flixfan@dorsai.dorsai.org). Published letters and E-mail may be edited for length.

Dear Editor:

While I am not so lucky as to have a cable system that carries the Sci-Fi Channel, I have to write a note to tell you how much I enjoyed Sci-Fi Entertainment #1. The whole issue was top-flight, but the interview with Joe Dante and the *Dracula* movie article were well worth the cover price. I especially liked the fact that you guys produced a slick magazine like *Starlog* but kept the fun edge that the before-mentioned magazine once possessed. I only hope that you can keep it up, especially since I just subscribed for two years worth!

Finally, before I go, some things that I'd like to see in future issues of *Sci-Fi Entertainment*:

1. A movie review column covering the latest theater and video releases.
2. A science fiction book review column.
3. A column covering sci-fi in comics, with reviews, of course.

Good luck on future issues.

Kevin W. Hall  
Sandston, VA

Editor,

I enjoyed the first issue of *Sci-Fi Entertainment*—very well done.

I was also very happy to see that, in the letters column, Max Lansing says that UFO is an "awesome show." It is about time that this series got the attention that it deserves!

UFO was ahead of its time. It used many things that are today standard elements of sci-fi TV series but had not been done on a weekly basis before UFO's debut in 1969. Its episodes featured multiple subplots; some episodes had a less-than-happy ending; and every episode featured the outstanding special effects work of Derek Meddings, who later did FX for many of the James Bond films, for Tim Burton's *Batman*, and many other major effects films. His work set the standard for much of what is done today, and he did it first on UFO.

James Killian  
Sumitan, AL

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment:

The highlight of your first issue, for me at least, was the Joe Dante interview. Here's a man who clearly is as much a fan as he is a professional filmmaker. Please keep us informed of Dante's future projects.

I hope such interviews will be a regular part of the new magazine; I'd love to see similar talks with John Carpenter, Sam Raimi, John Boorman, and Ridley Scott.

John Woodson  
Tulsa, OK

Since Joe's planned remake of *The Mummy* was dropped from the Universal schedule (in part due to cost overruns on *Waterworld*), he's relocated to Paramount, where he and producer Mike Finnell are developing a feature based upon Lee Falk's classic comic strip *The Phantom*, as adapted for the screen by Jeffrey Boam.

Meanwhile, Showtime subscribers can look forward to Joe's made-for-cable remake of the AIP teen angst epic *Runaway Daughters*, which reunites much of the cast from his werewolf classic *The Howling*, and features cameo appearances by AIP honcho Sam Arkoff and the independent studio's foremost director, Roger Corman, himself the subject of this issue's interview.

Dear Sci-Fi Entertainment:

Congratulations on your new magazine. The writing and the look of the magazine make it as a real "class act."

It was nice to see some coverage of Japanese animation in your first issue. However, the treatment of the topic, while broad in scope, was lacking in depth. I, and a great many other anime fans, would have preferred a more detailed piece on the specific films featured in the Channel's anime fest to the "once over lightly" introduction as presented.

Now that you've "introduced" us to anime, I hope that more specifically detailed articles will follow.

Lee Green  
Little Neck, NY

Dear Editor,

I really like the new magazine—a great improvement from the first couple of issues I received last year. I enjoyed your coverage of the new movies *The Mask*, *Wolf*, and *No Escape*. I also thought the *Star Trek* art was a nice change of pace.

I noticed that you had a write-up on the CBS *Twilight Zone Special*. I'm impressed that the Sci-Fi Channel is willing to promote programs from the other television mediums. Keep up the good work.

Mark Welborn  
Los Angeles, CA

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